

MORAL ESSAYS.

Contain'd in several

TREATISES
ON

Many Important DUTIES.

Written in *French*, by
Messieurs du Port Royal.

Faithfully Rendred into *English*, by
A Person of Quality.

Third Volume.

L O N D O N

Printed for R. Bentley and M. Magnes in
Russel-street in Covent-Garden, near
the Piazza's, MDCLXXX.

MORAVIAN

Journal in German

THE

ON

THE

Written in the

Journal in German

A

THE

THE

THE



An Advertisement.

WE have given to
this Volume the
Title of *The Third Volume of
Moral Essays*, because the de-
sign we had of joyning to
the same Work, and under the
same Title, the Treatises which
had appeared under that of the
Education of a Prince, and of
Composing a second Volume
of **ESSAYS**, being Publish-
ed, this here, which, with-

out that, would have been
but the Second, is now the
Third.

'Tis in Consideration of re-
ducing under this same Title
all the Treatises which are
of the same nature, that we
have added to this a small
Writing of Plays, whereof we
had a Right to Dispose, al-
though some persons had al-
ready inserted it in other
Works. And we have been
by so much more inclinable
thereunto, as these Works
were less common. It hath
not quite lost the Grace of
Novelty, beside that we have
taken an Occasion to Cor-
rect it in divers places, and
to

to add thereunto likewise
something.

There is yet another Treas-
ure, which is that of *Divers*
ways whercin God is Tempted,
of which there might have
been a Part seen under ano-
ther Form, but it is so chan-
ged and augmented that one
would say it is absolutely new,
or rather that it appears here
under its natural Shape and
Form, whereas it was, as it
were, Disguised in the o-
ther.

It would be to no pur-
pose to Note by what Ac-
cident these TREATISES
have been made, seeing that
it is not this Occasion which

can render them Useful,
the Publick Judging thereof
for the most part only ac-
cording to the Relation they
have to its Disposition and
Relish.

of which there might have
been a Part seen under ano-
ther Form, but it is to chan-

ge and augmented, that one

would say it is a lovely new

or rather that it appears here

under its natural Shape and

form, as it was, as it

was, I thought, in the o-

ther

then

to no pur-

pose to know by what Ac-

tion it was made

and being that

it is a new one which

can

A T A B L E

Of the Treatises contain'd in this
Volume.

First P A R T.

Of the Knowledge of ones self,

First Part.

Of the Knowledge of ones self, Se-
cond Part.

II Treatise.

Of Charity and Self-Love.

III Treatise.

Of the divers ways wherein God is
tempted.

IV Treatise.

Of Plays.

V Treatise.

Of Reports.

VI Treatise.

Of the Remedy against Suspicion.

VII Treatise.

That we must not be scandalized at
Pious Mens faults.

VIII Treatise.

The means of profiting by bad Ser-
mons.

PLAYS

PLAYS Printed for R. Bentley and M. Magnes.

Tartus a Comedy by Mr. Medburn.

Comedies by Mr. Howard.

All Mistaken, or the mad Couple.

English Monsieur.

Generous Enemies, a Comedy.

The Plain-Dealer, a Comedy.

Tragedies by Mr. Lee.

Rival Queens.

Sophonisba.

Metridates.

Nero.

Gloriana.

Oedipus.

Caesar Borge.

By John Dryden Esq;

Kind Keeper.

Oedipus.

Mistaken Husband.

By Mr. Durscy.

Fond Husband.

Madam Fickle.

Esquire Old-sap.

Fool turn'd Critick.

Virtuous Wife.

By Mrs. Bean.

Forced Marriage.

Town Fop.

Abdelazar.

By Mr. Crown.

Andromiche

Country Wit.

Calisto, a Masque

Destruction of Jerusalem.

Misery of Civil War.

Sertorius, by Mr. Bancroft.

The Orphan, by Mr. Otway, in the Press.

Theodosius, or the Force of Love.



Moral Essays.

First Treatise.

Of the Knowledge of ones self.

First Part.

I.



HE most common
Precept of *Pagan*
and *Christian* Philo-
sophy is this, which
Orders us to know
our selves; and there
is nothing in which
men agree more then in the Precept of
this Duty. 'Tis one of those sensible
B Truths

Truths, which hath no need of Proofs, and which finds in all men a heart which acknowledges them, and a light which approves them. How agreeable soever we imagin the Illusion of a man who is deceived in the *Idea*, which he hath of him self, we find it always unfortunate to be deceived, and we are on the contrary struck with the Sentiment, which a Poet hath expressed in these Verses

*Illi Mors gravis Incubat,
Qui nectus nimis omnibus,
Ignotus moritur sibi.*

2. We must set a greater value on these Principles in which men find themselves united by an unanimous Consent, because that seldom happens to them, being always by their vain and malignant humours inclin'd to contradict one another upon the least occasion; every one having a desire either to disparage others, or to distinguish himself from them, in saying something that is new and not following simply the common Tract: So Truth must be very clear, when stifling this Inclination it forces them to reunite themselves in some Maxim. 'Tis that which happens in respect of this. For there hath not been

a Philosopher who hath opposed it, and who hath pretended that man ought to avoid knowing himself. What if some one hath passed even to this excess? he cannot do it but by supposing that Man is so unfortunate, and that his Evils are so without remedy, that he could not but encrease his Misery by knowing himself. And so one should always know ones self, even to conclude by this strange way of Arguing, *That it is good not to know ones self.*

3. But that which is very strange is, that being so united to grant the Importance of this Duty— they are still far from practicing it. For, not labouring seriously to obtain this knowledge, they are hardly employed all their life, but with care how to shun it. Nothing is more odious to them than this light, which discovers them to their proper eyes, and which obliges them to see themselves such as they are. Thus they do all things to hide it from themselves, and they establish their quiet in living ignorantly and in the forgetfulness of their State and Condition.

4. A great Wit of this Age hath shewn, in an excellent Discourse, that this desire to avoid the knowledge of

ones self is the Fountain of all the tumultuons occupations of men, and above all, of that which they call *Divertisement*; That they seek in that only to rob themselves of themselves; That it sufficeth to render a man Miserable to oblige him to consider himself, and that there is no human Felicity in this World which is able to endure this consideration. Thus Man without Grace is so great a punishment to himself, that he inclines continually to fly from himself, that he looks upon himself in some sort as his own great Enemy, and that he thinks his happines consists in being forgetful of himself, and running headlong into this forgetfulness.

5. This Inclination is not only the effect of an evil Custom, nor of a particular disorder amongst some men; it's the general propensity of our corrupt Nature. We are out of our selves from the very moment of our Birth, and the Soul, which in her infancy doth only busy herself with outward things and the Pleasures of the Body, doth hereby render these Objects and Pleasures so familiar to her, and cleaves so strongly to them, that she cannot enter again into herself, but by great trouble and violence

lence. And as she finds not there what she desires, she freeth herself the soonest she can, and Melancholy inclines her to return presently to those other Objects, to which she applies herself with so much more eagerness, by how much more they assist her to forget her interiour Miseries, the sight whereof she cannot undergo. *Projicit se foras miserabiliter scalpi auide Contactu sensibillum.*

6. But not to urge any farther that this not knowing ones self must not be countenanced, and the better to dive to the bottom thereof, there must be added, that this knowledge is joyn'd in man to an inclination which appears quite contrary, and which makes him to regard himself in every thing. Because the greatest Pleasure of a proud man is to contemplate the *Idea* which he makes of himself. This *Idea* is the *Origin* of all his vain satisfactions: He relates all to it, and nothing pleaseth him but in proportion as it contributes to puff it up, to adorn it, and to render it more lively.

7. These two inclinations, whereof the one makes us to fly, and the other to seek the knowledge of our selves, are alike natural to a man; so spring they

from the same Fountain, tho' in appearance they are opposite.

Man, as being vain, will see himself. He avoids seeing himself, because being vain he is not able to suffer the sight of his Faults and Miseries. To accord these two contrary desires, he hath recourse to a Subtility worthy his Vanity, which gives him means to satisfy them both at the same time. This Craft or Subtility is to cover all his Faults, to blot them, in some sort, out of the Image which he hath formed of himself, and only to include therein the qualities which may raise him in his own thoughts. If he hath them not effectively, he hath them imaginarily, and if he find them not in his proper person, he endeavours to seek them in the opinion of men, or in outward things which he joyns to his *Idea*, as if they made some part thereof; by means of this deceit he is always absent from himself, and present to himself: He looks upon himself continually, and never sees himself truly, because he sees, instead of himself, only the vain Phantomes he hath formed thereof.

8. So when a *Caribian* represents himself to himself, he only sees a certain

tain figure resembling the image which he hath seen of himself in the water; and beholding it as exact in Shooting, as dexterous in Fishing, as Master of a certain Cabin, as having slain such and such of his Enemies, as Husband to such a Woman, he applies himself absolutely to these Objects and *Ideas* which renew them, and thus he passeth his whole life without reflecting on that part of his being which thinks and reasoneth, not dreaming what it is, from whence it came, what will become of it, what may cause its good or bad Fortune.

It is not to be imagined, that the Pride of other men acts otherways then this of these miserable people. They adorn only this Image, which is the object of their love a little more. A Captain looking on himself sees a Phantom on Horse back, who commands some Soldiers. A Prince sees a man richly cloathed, who is looked on with respect, and who is obeyed every where. A Magistrate sees a man dressed up with the Ornaments belonging to his Dignity, who is respected by others, because he is in a condition to oblige or disoblige them. A vain proud Woman looks on herself as an Idol, Char-

ming by her Beauty those who behold her. An Usurer sees himself in the midst of his Treasures. An Ambitious man represents himself surrounded with people who humble themselves at his Greatness. And so every one in all these actions have no other end, whereof self-love is the Original, but to joyn always to the *Idea* that they have of themselves, new Ornaments and new Titles.

9. There is also a more spiritual *Idea* one hath of himself, which is, when not conceiving distinctly either good or bad qualities, one conceives only what is expressed by the word *Me*; and this word conceived in this manner doth likewise hide from us all our faults, and doth suffice to gain our love. The secret apprehension we have thereof creeps in every where; we relate all thereto; this is the principle of the most part of Pleasures that we enjoy. And though we should come to unfold or unravel what this *Me* comprehends, we should find therein nothing lovely, and may be nothing which would not give horror; nevertheless we love it under this so confused *Idea* of *Me*, and we shun in it the distinct and particular

cular apprehension which makes us hate it.

10. From whence think you proceeds this trouble, which overwhelms those who have been in great places when forced to live at quiet in their own houses? It is not only because they see themselves too clearly, and that the apprehension they have of their Miseries and Faults doth trouble them. Perchance that is one of the reasons of their Melancholy, but not the only one. It is also because they do not see themselves throughly, and that there are few things which renew the *Idea* of their *Me*. This *Idea* causeth their pleasure during their fortune, and its loss their displeasure during their disgrace: we love not to employ our selves in solitude; the Images which we form there are infinitely more obscure then those aided by outward Objects. Men in great Employments are advertised by all those who address themselves to them, that they are Powerful, that they are able to hurt or to assist. A thousand things doth stir up lively the *Idea* of their *Me*, and sets it before their eyes with some agreeable and pleasing quality of *Great*, *Powerful*, and of *Respect*. Common Civility does the

same thing in respect of those who live in the world. For as it is Fill'd with Testimonials of Esteem, with Respect, and with Applications, it gives occasion of representing themselves to themselves, as being loved and esteemed, and by consequence as being lovely and esteemable. And by a contrary reason these deserts and solitudes do vex and trouble vain and ambitious men, because they do not speak to them of themselves, and because they would have them speak of nothing else.

11. There is a pleasure in hearing Self-love speak when it is not disguised at all, and that it discovers lively, what pleaseth it in difficult occupations, wherewith it chargeth men. There is scarcely, for example, any more laborious than those who speak in publick, as Traitors and Advocates : they are obliged to charge their memories with a thousand unpleasing affairs, and apply themselves to find out devices and expressions to fill up their discourses, to drain the forces of their bodies, and their Spirits, upon matters which they shall be glad to forget, as soon as they shall be discharged of their Offices. Nevertheless, because there are many things in their professions, which
renews

renews the *Idea* of themselves; those who exercise them with Honor, think themselves the happiest of men. Let us but hear what one of these antient Orators upon this subject said, to judge of what the rest maintain. "What

*Quintil.
dia. Orat.*

"is there more sweet, said he, to
"an honest man, born for honest
"pleasures, than to see his House always
"full of people, and to know that they
"render him these respects, not because
"of his Riches, nor out of hopes of be-
"ing his Heirs; nor because of some Of-
"fice he enjoys, but in respect of him-
"self; that even those to whom we give
"respect, in hopes to be their Heirs,
"those who are the richest, and the
"most in credit do come to see him, al-
"though oftentimes he be young & poor,
"to the end, that they may recommend
"to him their own, or their friends con-
"cerns? Is there any thing in Riches,
"and Grandeur, which can give pleasure
"equal to that which he feels; when
"he sees persons considerable for their
"age, and whose credit is spread through
"all the world, to confess in the abun-
"dance of Riches which they enjoy,
"that they have not the first and
"greatest of all worldly advanta-
ges,

"ges ; which is that which an Ora-
 "tor professeth? What shall I say of
 "that throng of people, who present
 "themselves to accompany him, or
 "who go before him? What shall I say
 "of the splendor with which he appears
 "in publick, of the respect given him in
 "mens opinions; of the joy which he
 "conceives, when being raised to speak
 "singly in the midst of a throng of peo-
 "ple, who listen to him attentively, he
 "sees the eyes of all the Auditors turn'd
 "towards him : That the people crowd
 "to hear him, and that he stamps in all
 "their minds the same Impressions, which
 "he desires to make appear in himself.

Behold what made this Roman under-
 gt the troubles and disgusts of his pro-
 fession. And if all those who are in o-
 ther dangerous and painful employments
 speak as simply as he ; they would tell
 us also, that all that pleased them there-
 in, is reduced to this *Idea* of their *Me*
 honoured and respected by others.

12. We see cleerly enough by these
 examples, in what fashion Self-love
 makes use of outward objects, to satisfy
 these two inclinations natural to men of
 knowing. and not knowing himself, not
 suffering on the one part, that he see
 himself otherwise, than by a confused

Idea,

Idea, which represents to him no one fault; and adding thereto on the other part, all that he can of exterior things, which give him means to fix there unto a phantastick Image of Greatness. But this nevertheless doth not suffice man to procure him the rest; and the pleasure which he seeks, nor to avoid the knowledge of those faults, whereof he hath so much horror. He hath need of quite other inventions to shun the sight of himself. In vain would he publish himself abroad, he would not fail to find himself there, and a thousand things would be able to set his faults before his eyes. He would see the Images thereof in all the faults, and in all the miseries of others, which he could not avoid seeing, and which oftentimes he looks on, even with pleasure. So that he would not find his account better out of himself, than in himself. There is great likelihood, that if the fear of seeing himself, had made him go out, the Image of himself, which should have been represented to him by all these outward Objects would have made him to enter again how unwilling soe he might have been.

13. To comprehend better in what manner man may be forced to see himself

self by objects, which are out of him, and what he doth to warrant himself from them it is necessary to consider, that he does not look upon himself less according to a certain being which he hath in the imagination of others, than according to what he really is; and that he does not only draw his portraiture by what he himself knows of himself; but also by the sight which he discovers in the minds of others. Because we are all in respect of one another, as that man who served as a model to the Practitioners in the Academies of Painters. Each of those, who environ us, do form to themselves a portraiture of us, and the different ways wherewith our actions are observed do give leave to make them differently.

The great and the little, those who have a good repute, and those who have none; are hardly distinguished, but because there are more people who draw the Pictures of the one than of the others. How many draw the Portraiture of a Prince? All his Kingdom, all Forreign Countries are for him an Accademy of Painters, whereof he is the Model. Those who are more remote represent him by more gross draughts.

draughts. Those who are nearer do draw his Picture more lively, and more resembling. A mean man, on the contrary, who lives in his Family, is only Painted by the small number of those who know him, and the Portraits which they make of him scarcely go out of the Limit of the Town.

But what is more considerable in this is, that men do not only draw the portraits of others, but that they see also those which are made of them, and if they would look on them indeed, nothing would be so capable to remedy their pride, nor more able to help to undeceive them then, even the sight of these portraits.

Let us choose the greatest and most glorious man in the World, and allow him so great a Wit as to contemplate at once all this variety of Judgments which are made of him, and to enjoy fully the sight of the thoughts and of the motions which he excites in others, there is no vanity can undergo this sight. For a small number of advantageous opinions he would see an infinite which would displease him. He would see that the faults which he dissembles, or which he doth not know, are in the eyes of the
most

most part of people; that they entertain themselves often about no other thing, and that men observe them only in this manner; he would see that the World is very little touched with all these fine qualities with which he flatters himself that some see them not at all, others behold them with a coldness, others only observe that in which they are defective, some hide and disfigure them, joyning thereunto some faults which they know in him, and that from all this he draws his own picture which is only proper to extinguish his Pride.

There needs only to learn to humble our selves, that we open our eyes to all these several opinions men form of us, and Reason, if we desire sincerely to know them, will discover them. But because vanity is an evil whereof we will not be cured, and that we place our happiness not to be cured of it, we make use of an Invention, which how gross soever it is doth nevertheless work its effect. It is, that although Reason in general be convinc'd that men form of us many Judgments not very favourable, and that the Examples of those we hear ever and anon made of others, and those which we make of them our
selves.

selves might instruct us, do nevertheless in some sort cause us not to see those which are disadvantageous to us, and to apply our selves chiefly to those which are advantageous to us. So in Banishing from our minds all these Objects which may be able to displease us, in fixing our selves only to those which are pleasing to us, in deceiving our selves willingly, and in avoiding being deceived, our vanity remains half satisfied, and procures this fond Pleasure in which vain men place their false felicity.

14. It is yet more easy that the great ones, and generally all those whom it is our intent to please, do entertain themselves in this Illusion, because instead of making for our selves only one Portraiture of other men, we may in some sort make two, the one interiour which is true, the other exteriour wherein we paint nothing but what we judge may please them; and great care is taken afterwards to set before their eyes only this false Picture, and to endeavour to make them take that for the true one. Without doubt they would easily hinder themselves from being deceived therein, and might convince themselves if they would, that there is nothing so false

false and so vain as all these Testimonies of Esteem and Affection which men shew them. They know often what they think themselves of those to whom they return the like, and they have no reason to judge others more sincere then themselves. But they are easily held back in this point, and do not dive so deep into these things. They content themselves therefore with this deceitful Surface, they leave there these interior portraitures which they fear to discover, and they make a stop only at these flattering Pictures, which are made purposely to draw from them what we pretend thereby.

15. We make use of the same preparation to hinder that the faults and miseries of others, and the Judgment which we see made of them, and which we our selves make of them, do not call us to our selves nor discover to us our own juglings. Wit assisted by self-love doth cut off all the reflections it can make, or applies it self so little thereunto that they make scarcely any Impression at all. We hear every hour people who deceive themselves, spoken of with scorn. We see that they are the common objects of mens disdain, because

because there is nothing more ridiculous then a man deceived, and deceived by his own vanity. Nevertheless we do not think that we are those ridiculous and deceived men; let men say of us in our absence what is said of others before us, let us give therein as much Subject as they, and let there be no appearance that they have more respect for us then for all the rest.

How frequent and how certain soever these objects may be, they have not more force to oblige the mind to enter into it self, and there to see the same faults and the same miseries then it sees in others. Think we more on death for hearing or for seeing the death of those with whom we have lived? We fly his Spectacle if we can; if we cannot fly it, yet we endeavour to fly the reflections it ought to produce. If we cannot stifle them absolutely, we turn away from them with what expedition possible. What I have said of Death may be said of all the other Miseries and of all Human Frailties, which may be able to represent ours to us. These Images strike us at every moment, but we endeavour as often to resist, and not to be daunted. We deceive our
selves

selves if we can, and if we cannot do it absolutely, at least we strive to turn our thoughts another way.

16. What should we say of a man who seeing his Picture every day in a Looking glass, and seeing it therein continually should not know it, and would never say *Behold I am here*? should we not accuse him of stupidity little different from folly? This nevertheless is what all men do; and it is likewise the only secret they have found to make themselves happy. They see every moment the Image of their own selves, I mean of their own proper faults; in those of others, and yet they will not acknowledge them. To be full of Miseries and not to see them, to be ignorant of our faults when nobody else is, to be the Subject of most peoples laughter and not willing to know any thing of it; to feed our selves with vain Imaginations being unwilling to know that they are vain, is a condition which doth not seem very desirable; and yet it is this which is the delight of worldly men, and chiefly of the great ones.

17. 'Tis by these means we are interrupted from seeing the Truth, when we should use some care and application

tion to find it. But there are some encounters wherein Truth shews it self to us, and in which we should be forced to see it, if we did not use Cunning to avoid it. For some times we find men Charitable enough to try to free us from the delusions wherein we live in respect of our selves. Self-love therefore endeavours to banish this inconvenience, wants not yet the way to prosper therein. For it expresses so much Melancholy and evil humour to those who would do us this good Office; it finds so many pretences not to believe what is discovered to us of our faults; it is so ingenious to find out some greater in those who observe ours, and to make the judgments which are made to our disadvantage pass for wicked, that there is hardly any body will hazard to tell them us.

The general Principle that self-love inspires us with is, That we condemn nothing in us by a motive of Equity and Justice. So when any one shews that he does not approve of us in every thing, we attribute to him the *Idea* of prevention, of jealousy, or some other less favourable. And as no body loves to be looked so upon, there is formed
mong

amongst men a kind of Conspiracy to dissemble the opinions which they have one of another; and there is no agreement which is better preserved than that, because it is grounded upon the sentiment of self-love, from which few or none are exempt.

18. We must not think that men do not take care to hide the Truth only in respect of those whom they fear, or from whom they hope something. They do the same almost in respect of all the World.

Men apply themselves more to deceive great men, but they do not apply themselves to undeceive those of meaner quality. This is all the difference that's made between the one and the other. They love not to be hated by any body, so they do not love to tell truth to any one. They know on the contrary that to make it be received there should be many niceties, moderations, and many studied inventions. Now men will not take this pains for people they do not value. So we do not tell the Truth to Persons of Quality, because it is not our interest to do it. Nor to those of meaner degree because we have not Interest enough to tell it them.

19. This reserve that men keep amongst themselves in avoiding the Communicating the thoughts they have to the disadvantage of one another, is not nevertheless without Limits. And there is reason sometimes which persuades them to dispence therewith. There needs also often but a little provocation to noise abroad on a suddain what we had kept secret for a long time. And moreover we have not been reserved in this manner, but in speaking to the persons themselves, whose faults were known to us. But that which we dissembled in their presence, we speak ordinarily more freely in their absence, as we have had then more trouble to refrain. It is true we govern our selves a little more reservedly in respect of those who can hurt us, and we use more precaution to discover what men think of them. But as it is an unsufferable Constraint to hide always these our sentiments, the desire which we have to free our selves from them makes us easily put on Confidence enough to trust those to whom we speak, and that there wants little or no reasons to incline us to declare our selves with freedom.

Now although these wicked Prodigalities

galities, which happen so often in the discourses men make, are in themselves a very great evil, seeing that whereas Charity doth oblige to tell Persons themselves of their faults, to give them thereby means to Correct them, and to hide them from others, to favour them we do ordinarily quite contrary, and speak of these faults to all the world, except to those to whom it should be necessary to speak of them. There might happen nevertheless from thence some good, if we had a care to profit thereby. Because, these particular discourses spreading themselves by little and little, and forming a publick Clamour, there returns often thereby something to the ears of them it concerns, because there are many found, who, having not Charity or Force enough to tell themselves what they think, are glad to be discharged thereof by attributing it to others. It would be then a means for those to whom it is discovered to draw them out of that Delusion wherein they live. But we have such deceitful hearts, and so full of aversion from any thing of Truth, that we abuse very often this means, and render it useless to our selves. For instead of judging of these discourses

fes

ses, and these opinions by which we are detracted as we ought they are spread abroad amongst an infinite number of persons, and so we have not right to complain thereof to any particular body, the inclination we have to deceive ourselves causeth us to turn all our malice against him who is charged therewith; We persuade our selves that he is single in his opinion; that he hath not entered thereupon, but through hate or interest, and that there is no man of sense and reason who does not condemn it. We attribute to him likewise some Imprudence, or some excess for pretending more right to reject those advices, and by the means of this voluntary delusion we stifle the impression which these discourses might imprint in us, we conserve our selves in the esteem we have of our selves, and we avoid in some sort seeing what the world disapproves, because it is an object or spectacle which vanity is not able to suffer.

20. I have said that we shun it in some sort, because we do not shun it absolutely. Truth always makes it self a little light through all those Clouds wherewith men strive to obscure it: there pass always some rayes which incom-

mode Pride, and which trouble this false quiet which it endeavors to procure it self. These opinions, which are grounded only upon a voluntary error, are never firm and sure. They are always mixed with Mistrust, and consequently with melancholy, trouble, and molestation. So instead of this pure Joy, and this full and entire satisfaction which self-love aimeth at, all it can do with all its wiles is to suspend for some time the sentiments of sadness, which are nourished at the bottom of the heart, and which are always ready to seize thereon.

21. These are the natural sentiments of Self-love, and the addresses it makes use of to conceal our faults, and to hinder people from telling us of them. And it is remarkable that as it is in it self a very great fault not to see the truth, so Self-love does not allow it no more than others. Self-love does not use less artifice to disguise it to others then to our selves. And therefore we see few or none who do not esteem it an honour to love truth, and who do grant sincerely that they are not at quiet until it be discovered to them. We are offended with this reproach as much as with

with any other, and in a word, we would have the glory to love Truth, and the satisfaction never to hear it.

But as these two Passions in some sort do not hold together, we endeavor to accord them in giving something to the one and to the other. It is true, that as it is Self-love which causeth this difference, so it makes it very unequal. For it brings it about that we are never told of those essential faults, to which we are inclined by a quick and active Passion; that we dissemble to those which get us ill will from men, and which would give occasion to despise our selves, and to believe that 'tis with reason that others do slight us. All the liberty therefore that we give to others upon this subject, is to mind us of some small faults, which do not disfigure the Image we have of our selves, and which suffers the whole beauty thereof to remain. *Velut si egregio Impressos reprehendas Corpore nevus.*

So we suffer men to declare their opinions of a Discourse, or of a Writing, which we have made to find fault therein with some expressions not very Just, some bad Cadence, some place neglected; conditionally nevertheless that they esteem the design of it; the

Judgment, the Oeconomy, and the other more essential parts. We pardon likewise those who advertise us of some want of respect, of management and other trifles of this nature, provided they do not touch upon our principal Passions, and that all they observe in us may subsist with the esteem and approbation of the generality. 'Tis on these Conditions, and at this rate we resolve with our selves sometimes to purchase glory, love truth, and give it some entrance; yet it must be Self-love which opens it to it, and that it be accompanied with testimonies of esteem and affection not to be slighted.

22. In the second Part we shall speak more particularly of the ways men use to hinder that truth trouble them not, in the esteem and love of themselves. But what we have already said may suffice to shew that we extend too much those common Maxims, that men naturally love truth, that they have a natural aversion for what is false, and that there being an Infinite of persons who would deceive others, there are none at all who would be deceived; seeing that it appears on the contrary, that the world is almost composed of nothing but

but wilful blind people, who hate and fly the light, and who labour for nothing more than to deceive themselves, and to entertain themselves in delusion. Where is then this love of Truth, wherewith we flatter our selves, and what hatred for falsity may be found in men who according to Scripture seek nothing else?

23. Nevertheless, we may say that these Maxims have place in things Indifferent, in which men taking no Interests at all, do not in effect love to be deceived, and prefer truth before falsity. The which shews some natural love for Truth. But it is seldom seen that this natural Inclination is free to act, and that the mind is not prepossessed with some Passion which makes it incline more to one side than to another. There needs scarcely any thing to make Self-love to deliberate. It makes private and secret Interests even things wherein it seems to have none at all. The least advance, the least engagements, the least inclination to please or to displease suffice to take away the ballance, and to incline the minds, to seek out reasons only on one side: How many are there, for example, who have no reason to continue in an

opinion, but because there would be some trouble to examin the Contrary reasons. They fly the pains of instructing themselves, because it is laborious: They will judge, and decide, because they will appear Learned, and to satisfie at once these two inclinations they suppose without other examination that what they have formerly learn'd is true. *Tedio novæ Cura semel plagita pro æternis servant.*

24. The chief and principal use we make of this love of truth, is, to persuade us that what we love is true. For if we would do our selves Justice, we should acknowledge that we love not things because they are true, but that we believe them true, because we love them. Our minds are fixed to objects Independant of their truth, and by the sole relation of these Inclinations. But because they cannot enjoy them, if they look upon them as false, they endeavor in some sort to add thereto the Idea of truth, that they may be fixed thereunto more firmly. *Quicunque aliud*

Aug. Con.
l. 10. 13.

amant, hoc quod amant volunt esse veritalem.

25. We love truth in general as the common

common and general good. For as we can love nothing which we do not think good, likewise we can love nothing which we believe not to be true. But Self-love knows very well how to conjoin these general Inclinations with particular Passions; And as it makes us believe that what we love is good, it makes us likewise believe that what we love is true; that is to say; we cannot love what is false under its proper and natural form, and loving in effect many false and deceitful objects, it finds means to represent them under the image of truth.

26. This aversion so uniform and constant which is found amongst men, for the truth which discovers them to themselves, and this inclination so general of shunning the sight of their faults, as their greatest misfortune gives way to believe that this common Maxim which calls them back to themselves, and makes them to know themselves, *Nosce teipsum*, proceeds not from a common light persuading them that this knowledge is for their good, and which makes them desire it, but that it may well have its source in the knowledge of every mans heart, who feeling himself incom-

modated with the vanity, and the Injustice which he observes in others, persuades him to seek and desire for them, this knowledge which he neither seeks nor desires for himself.

27. This thought is so much more likely, as nothing shocks us more in the faults we observe in others, then the blindness wherein we see they are in regard of themselves. What is there more troublesome than a vain man who is taken up with nothing but himself, and who would have men only to apply themselves to him, who admires himself continually, and who imagines that others do the same, or that they are to blame if they do not? And who is he who hath not a great inclination to tell persons of this opinion, that they would do well to labor to know themselves to draw themselves out of those delusions wherein they are? *Notæ teipsum.*

28. The World is full of people, who observe other mens faults with an admirable Judgment, who pardon them nothing, and who being subject to the same, or to greater faults themselves, do not make the least reflection thereon. The vainest persons most frequently laugh at other mens vanity. Those
who

who are Cheated, most laugh at those whom they believe deceived. The most unjust reproach others of their Injustice: The sharpest men give sweet lessons; The most prejudiced persons speak earnestly against prejudice: The most opiniated are the first in accusing others of obstinacy. It is very hard, not to have a desire to advise these sort of people that they speak to themselves in speaking against others, and not to tell them at least in their heart; *Nescit teipsum.*

29. When we see these ambitious men who heap enterprizes upon enterprizes, who form designs to which many lives would not satisfy, who trouble by their caprichios both their own and other mens quiet, who never dream of death which threatens them every moment, who imagine that others live, only for them, who devour with an insatiable Coverousness, other mens Goods. Who is it that does not find himself inclined to recal them to the knowledge of their mortal Conditions, and to make them mindful that they are but men?

We feel the same motions in an infinite other remcounters, as when we see people, who for want of knowing themselves,

selves, vndertake things infinitely above them, and in which they cannot prosper: who will do all because they judge and think themselves capable of all, and who spoil all by their want of parts; who glory in taking Counsel of no body; who complain to others of their bad success that they have had by their imprudence. In fine, as the ignorance of ones self is found almost in all vices, and is most what shocks us therein, we should every moment endeavor to draw people out of their delusion in teaching them to know themselves, if this motive were not withheld by others more powerful.

30. We have right methinks to conclude from what I said but now, that this Precept, *Know thou thy self*: in the mouth of those who have acted only by self-love was rather the effect of impatience, and vexation, stirred up by the faults that they see in others, then by a clear sight of the necessity of this knowledge for every man in particular, and for his proper good. We would have others to know themselves, to the end they might act in a less shocking manner in regard of us: And yet we will not know our selves because we will not see

see in our selves what thwarts us therein, nor think our selves obliged to labor to correct some faults, in which we are very glad to continue. We find means to foster our selves in our proper delusion, in fixing our thoughts only on certain objects, and hiding others from our selves. But we find the delusion of others very ridiculous, because we see in them what they will not see therein, and clearly perceive the Judgments that are made of them, of which they see but a part. We do not forbear nevertheless to envy something the condition of those persons so deceived, and to covet their place: But it is by fancying that if we were there we could avoid the faults we see in them, and that we could procure to our selves all that they wanted. And I know not if we would have it on condition to live in the same delusion wherein we believe they do. For men have light enough not to believe others happy by the possession of false wealth, and they are not capable to place their happiness therein, but by banishing away the thought that it is false, and taking it for real.

31. It is true, our understanding is not so blind but that having recall'd others;

others by vexation to the knowledge of themselves, it must conclude from thence in general, that it would be useful that every one should know himself, and apply to himself this Precept in giving it to others. We are also very glad to honour our selves in making a shew to be comprehended in the Precepts which we give to others. But these cold and speculative applications are very far from forming an effective desire to labour to acquire this knowledge, and lastly human reasons, which might carry or incline us thereunto, are hardly able to make us surmount the natural disaffection we have thereunto. Whosoever looks upon himself only in relation to this present life, is always unfortunate, be it that he do know or not know himself. He is more really so in not knowing himself, but he is more sensibly so in knowing himself; and the sensible carries him ordinarily to the real, because it makes Impression upon the senses, whereas the insensible realities act only upon the reason. Now reason when it withstands the inclinations of Self-love is not of very great use in the Conduct of life; and after all, Death which puts an end to all Imprudence, and all the wisdom

of men renders the advantage of the one above the other so inconsiderable, that it takes away the desire of seeking eagerly: Which made Solomon say to express this human opinion, *That he hath said in himself: If I must die, what will it profit me to have applyed my self to wisdom?* Every advantage which regards only this present life is hardly worth the pains we undergo to obtain it, because this life is only an instant which deserves not to be deliberated on.

32. We shall not find then in our own nature any inclination which doth move it to apply its self to the knowledge of its self, nor sufficient motives which can make it desire: But if we add thereto the lights of faith, the necessity of this duty will appear so pressing, that we shall have much ado to comprehend that there are any Christians, who would live well in the ignorance of themselves, and their estate. For this faith teaches us, that it is in vain that we fly and avoid knowing our selves, that this sight is unavoidable; seeing that God will open the eyes of all men that they may see themselves such as they are, but with this horrible difference, That those who have been unwilling to know themselves

selves in this World, shall see whether they will or no themselves everlastingly with a sight which shall fill them with rage and despair; Whereas those who have not avoided seeing themselves in this life, and who have laboured by this means to destroy in themselves what is displeasing to God, shall hereafter see nothing which may not be joyful to them; or rather they shall forget themselves happily for eternity, because they will see nothing but God in themselves and in all other Creatures. We have therefore only to chuse either to endeavor to know our selves in this World, or to be for ever our own proper torment. By making tryal of this terrible Threat God pronounces against the wicked. *Arguam te & statuam contra faciem tuam*, I will reprehend thee, and will place thee before thy own face.

33. What despair will that be of a miserable Soul, who having avoided all her life seeing and knowing her self, shall be at once fixed and glued to this object for all Eternity, without hope of ever being able to divert her self for one single moment; who shall have continually before her eyes all her Crimes, not being able to destroy them, nor to avoid
seeing

seeing them. This is the Inevitable punishment of this voluntary forgetfulness of ones self. We must labour sincerely either to know our selves during this life, or to know our selves eternally in the other in this horrible manner. There is no Mean, neither Reason nor Faith have doubtless any trouble to deliberate. But as we are carried to this forgetfulness by a very violent weight, and which doth overpoise almost all the World, it is necessary to fortifie our Faith, and to maintain our Reason by all the considerations which may discover to us the advantages of this Knowledge, as are these which shall be mentioned hereafter.

34. We may say that as the not knowing of ones self is the source or fountain of all vices, the knowledge thereof is the ground or foundation of virtues. And we need only consider the nature of each Virtue to be persuaded thereof. What means, for example, to be truly humble without knowing ones self? or rather, what is humility but a knowledge of ones sins, of ones miseries, and of ones unworthiness, which makes one abject in his own thoughts, and judge himself worthy of all sorts of Abasements?

ment? This is the definition which St. Bernard gives thereof. *Humilitas virtus est, quâ homo verissimâ sui Cognitione sibi Ipse vilescit.* The sight of our faults is therefore the foundation of humility, and 'tis at the same time that which preserves it. 'Tis presently lost if we only observe our virtues whether they be true or false. Strange condition of mans Soul to whom sickness it self is necessary, that she may not die! She is almost void of all good, and cannot see the little that remains without danger of loosing it.

35. The knowledge of our selves doth not humble us simply in respect of God. It hinders us also that we do not raise our selves above our neighbor, there being nothing but the forgetfulness of our selves which is able to make us contemn and despise him. One sick person never insults over another, but in forgetting his own sickness, and as one is always full of sweetness towards ones self, he never useth others hardly but in distinguishing himself from them. And this is it which the knowledge of our selves doth not permit us to do, seeing that it always discovers to us either the same faults in us, or the roots thereof, and

makes

makes us feel the weight which we should undergo if Gods grace did not permit it. Therefore the Apostle in recommending us to reprove with sweetness those who sin *in spiritu lenitatis*, recalls us to the knowledge of our weakness, and the danger wherein we are of falling every moment : *Ne & tu tentaris*. Behold the source of meekness, and of humility towards ones neighbor.

36. Man is so weak and so vain, that he is equally carryed to pride by the sight of Virtue, which he thinks he hath, and by that of faults which he observes in others. By the one he raiseth himself in his own opinion above them. By the other he humbleth them and bringeth them under him. But the knowledge of ones self preserves both the one and the other; and in placing ones proper faults before ones eyes, it stifles on one part the complacency that it may have in his virtue, and it renders the other more Indulgent to anothers faults. So it keeps him at least at a level with other men: It teacheth him to bear them as he would be born with by them, and it makes also in some manner a good use of Self-love.

37. The forgetfulness of ones self
pro-

produceth obdurateness, and by a contrary effect the knowledge of ones self produceth Piety. For there is in the sentiments of Compassion for others some secret reflections upon our selves, by which we look upon our selves either as having suffered the same evils, or as being liable to suffer them.

Non Ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

And it is this which makes men who believe they are above others, and who imagine the evils wherewith others are afflicted, cannot happen to them, are for the most part hard hearted, because they make not upon themselves these kind of reflections, which soften the heart in consideration of anothers evil.

It is the same with the most part of Injustices we do to others. They come ordinarily from a blindness, which makes us never blame our selves, but think that we are exempt from all faults and misdemeanors, we lay the blame all upon others. So that nothing contributes so much to make us just and equitable towards others as the knowledge of our selves. 'Tis that makes us discover in the bottom of our hearts the impression
of

of the Law of nature which forbids us to do to others, what we would not they should do to us. 'Tis that which disperses all the Clouds wherewith Self-love doth observe this rule in the rencounters wherein it is concerned. 'Tis this which hinders us likewise from complaining with eagerness of the disadvantageous Judgments men form of us, and of the injustices men may do us, in convincing us that oftentimes we deal so with others without taking care thereof. In fine, 'tis this which suppresseth mens insolence, and haughtiness, and placing a very lively Image of their miseries before their eyes, destroys the most ordinary cause of injustices which they do to others.

38. The sight of our faults in suppressing our pride, suppresseth also the consequences of it, and all the Passions wherewith it mingles it self, and as there are few whereof it is not the source, there also few whereof this sight is not the remedy. A man who knows himself well, is scarcely emulous, because he is convinced that he deserves nothing, and therefore he does not believe that the honor which is given to others is due to him.

He

He is neither sharp nor vindictive, because the small esteem that he hath of himself, doth not make him take or reckon the offences men do to him as things of moment.

He cannot hate any man, because he cannot hate himself, and sees nevertheless nothing in others that he does not acknowledge in himself in some degree.

He is not very ambitious, and he cannot form designs to raise himself in the World, because these designs spring from a belief we have that we deserve the rank whereto we aspire, and do think that we have more cunning and industry than others to arrive thereunto. Now a man who knows himself well, doth not flatter himself with these thoughts.

He does not conceive moreover this elevation as a great good. He perceives that these passions may render him very miserable in some condition. That his Covetousness would exceed its limits more, if it had more means to satisfy is self; and in the uncertainty wherein he is, whether it would be good or bad for him, he easily concludes to keep himself in the places wherein he finds himself.

39. That Poverty which *Jesus Christ* hath made the first of the Beatitudes, and which is praised in so many places in Scripture, is nothing else but an humble knowledge of ones self. For to be poor in this manner, one must know that he is so, and able to say, with the Prophet, *Ego vir videns paupertatem tuam*. That is to say, that we ought to know in us either the lack of goods which we have not, or the lack of all right to the goods which we hold from Gods liberality, which includes an entire knowledge of our selves.

40. It is easie to comprehend how this knowledge doth make us more patient in respect of the evils which are purely opinion; as unfavourable judgments which are made of us, calumnies, and falsities. For it is clear, that knowledge ought to lessen the sense thereof by the sight it gives us of our effective misery, which yet is much more great then all that man can say of it. But we do not see at first how this knowledge of our miseries and faults may serve us to be more patient in outward evils, in losses, in disgraces, in sickness, in griefs. We might also believe that it would be a new Charge which would

only be proper to overwhelm the Soul by sadness and despair. Yet it is not so, for if this sight of our faults be a burthen, 'tis a burthen which comforts one in all other afflictions; because it discovers to us that they are Just, that they are proportioned to our Inward evils, and that they may serve as a remedy thereunto; that it convinces us that prosperity would not have been less dangerous then adversity, and that giving us leave to reflect upon all that is arrived to us in our life of good and evil, it makes us see that we have yet more abused our selves with good then evil, and that we are charged more strictly therewith in the sight of God.

41. It is yet easier to comprehend how much the knowledge of ones self doth contribute to Prudence. For the most part of enterprises ill managed, and designs rashly undertaken spring from the presumption of those who form them; and this presumption comes from a blindness wherein they are in respect of themselves. There is nothing more frequent then these indiscretions in particular actions, and they all spring for the most part from the principal action of life which is the choice of the

the State and Employment wherein every one ought to pass his time. For it is this wherein the ignorance of our selves makes us to commit the greatest faults.

There is no man so disgraced by Nature who cannot find in the order of the world a place proportioned to the strength of his mind and body, but the small knowledge which he hath of himself is the cause that most people make a bad choice. Let us make reflection on those who take upon them the Charges and Employments of this World, and the places that they enjoy, and we shall scarcely find any one well placed. How many are there who having Arms and no Head do chuse Employments which have need of a head and not of Arms? How many are there who being born to obey and not to govern do possess Places where there is need of Commanding and not of obeying? How many that ingage themselves in Offices which are above their Sphear, their Power, and above their Virtue? and how few withdraw themselves from them by the knowledge of their Incapacities? Every one thinks he is able, and only limits his pretentions by the debility wherein

wherein he finds himself of being raised to a higher pitch. This is the most common Source of worldly disorders, and of the Evils that befall both Church and State, and likewise of each particular. For 'tis not possible that a person ill placed, and who wants necessary qualities to acquit himself of the Employment wherein he is engaged, should not commit a world of faults, and these faults which are the sequels of his temerity and presumption do render him ridiculous in this World, and everlastingly miserable in the other.

42. The sole knowledge of ones self may supply the defect of Talents, and the sole defect of this knowledge on the contrary renders all these Talents useless, dangerous, and pernicious to him who hath them. 'Tis no great harm to have neither Memory, Understanding, Conduct, Science, Industry, nor Ability, provided that one know it; Let him borrow of some other what he hath not, and undertake nothing which requires those qualities which God hath not pleased to bestow upon him. A man with all these Imperfections, in applying himself only to that which is proportion-

ed

led to his ability, is Praise-worthy, seeing that he may become a Saint, and that he is often more acceptable to God than those who have all the qualities which he wants. He is only deprived of them for a Moment, that is, for this present life, and he hath as much right as any man to hope he may be partaker of them in the other. But let us suppose all these Talents in one man, and as much light and understanding as we will, if with these he does not know himself in his imperfections, and in his weaknesses, all these qualities will prove only his fall and ruin; and often also in this world. If he cannot measure his enterprises by his forces, he will enter into rash engagements and presumption which hath no boundaries, not being checked by the Rains of the knowledge of ones self, will carry him away to dangerous excels.

One may add to these particular reasons this general one which ought to make more Impression upon our minds and add thereto more horroir of this blindness. That as the common punishment of the Condemned in the other life will be to see themselves, *Arguam te, & statum contra faciem tuam*, the

general Character of the Condemned in this here is not to see themselves; so that it is equally true that we enter not into heaven unless we know our selves, and into hell because we do not know our selves.

The death of sin which is the cause of eternal death is accompanied always with a kind of misfortunate drowsiness which deprives us of the knowledge of our condition, and therefore the Prophet earnestly beseeched God, *That he would enlighten his eyes to the end that he might not sleep in Death*, because he knew very well that this death was inseparable from that drowsiness, and that provided he did not sleep he should not dye. *Illumina oculos meos, ne unquam obdormiam in morte.* The State that sin reduceth man to is so horrible that he would not suffer it, if he saw it but, and so men whom Pleasure draws thereunto find means to hide it from themselves by a thousand Inventions which they are miserably ingenious to find out.

44. One of the most criminal ones and yet the commonest is to stifle in ones self the sight which condemns these disorders, in justifying them to their faces

by false Rules which authoriseth them. 'Tis the Origin of so many Errors in Morality, and of so many bad Maxims which men have always endeavoured to introduce into the Church, and principally in these latter times. For men not being willing to render their actions conform to the Law of God, have endeavoured to render the Laws of God conform to their actions. In stead of redressing their corrupt Inclinations according to the exactness of this Divine rule, they have endeavoured to strain this rule, even to adjust it to their inclinations. They will not only follow their own Interests and Passions, but they will also be approved in their Interests and Passions, nor will they permit that their Consciences reproach them of being unjust. So that things not Answering their expectation in the Maxims which God hath given us for our guide, if they did leave them in their Purity, they have endeavoured to alter them, to find therein this approbation which they seek, and to appease by this means the trouble of their Conscience. 'Tis thus that by the favour of these false lights, which they willingly take for true ones, they settle themselves in this

unfortunate Peace and Quiet, which is properly the sleepiness which the Prophet beseeched God to be preserved from by the Rays of the true light.

45. What if they cannot succeed to hide entirely this light which condemns them, they have recourse to other means to weaken the effect of it, and to hinder the Impression which it would be able to make upon them. Sometimes in letting the Law subsist, they are contented not to think of it, never comparing their actions therewith, nor ever looking on them unless with contrary faces, which do not represent to them what they have defective. If they cannot stop the sight of this opposition entirely which they have to the Laws of God, they weaken and diminish the Idea of it in joining themselves to an infinite of people which they condemn as well as themselves; as if this crowd of Criminals was capable to defend them against God. Lastly, as they do not disguise the Laws of God, they disguise themselves to themselves. They attribute to themselves motives and intentions which they have not, and will not see those they have. Thus in having a false judgment of their actions, they

they justify themselves during their whole life by the means of this voluntary delusion. Behold the sleepiness we must desire to be preserved from, and what every honest well-meaning man ought to resist all his life by endeavouring to know himself, and by embracing all means which may help him therein, and which we are going to shew in this second Part.

Second Page

Continuing down to Highway 10

E have endeavored in
the first part of this
Treatise, only to make
D³
itself distinct from the
gold in this part that
was and joined to a sin-
gle laboring to acquire

the
I'll tell them that this desire is one of
means to attain thereto. And we may
it, and to open to them the most proper
we should lead into the way that leads to
to those who are to be saved. There is nothing more to



Of the Knowledge of Ones self.

Second Part.

Containing Means to Acquire it.



WE have endeavoured in the first Part of this Treatise, only to make the knowledge of ones self desired. We suppose in this here that desire quite formed and joined to a sincere resolution of labouring to acquire this knowledge. There is nothing more to be done but to put those who are so well disposed, into the way that leads to it, and to open to them the most proper means to attain thereunto; And we may first tell them that this desire is one of the

the Principallest of them, and that it would suffice to produce this effect if it were full and entire. For there is this difference betwixt this knowledge and that of objects which are out of us, we may be ignorant of other things, how desirous soever we may be to know them, but we continue not in the ignorance of our selves, but only because we do not desire absolutely to forsake it, and we nourish in the bottom of our hearts a secret disowning of truth. It is this which in us opposes the light of God, and hinders it from penetrating our understandings. Without that it would make us see clearly into all the foulds of our hearts; it would advertise us of all our dangers, and we should have need of no other thing to make us know our selves perfectly, but to expose our selves to these Divine beams.

2. We have shewn in the first Part that this miserable Inclination was become natural to man since sin, and we must add here, that grace never destroys it absolutely, and that whatsoever desire it inspires us with not to blind our selves, there rests always as we may say in the bottom of the old man an inclination towards this voluntary blind-

3. There is nothing that makes us better to comprehend the greatness of mans disorder then the sight of this miserable Propensity we feel in our selves. For God being the Truth, the Light, the Justice; to hate the Light, the Truth, the Justice, is to hate God himself. Nevertheless man hates them. He would gladly that this Truth were not, that this light were extinguished, and that this Justice were abolished; that is to say he would that there were no God. He wisheth that there were an annihilation of it, and not being able to destroy it in his proper being, he destroys it as much as he can for himself by shutting his eyes against the light of Truth.

Behold that condition in which we are not only born, but wherein yet we are partly engaged, and from whence we ought to endeavour to free our selves by lessening as much as we shall be able this natural averness we have for Truth, and by labouring to encrease in us what God hath given us of love for it. It is good to exercise our selves more about this work to convince our selves of the weakness of this love. We may easily do it in considering how much a perfect and sincere love, of

which the heart is possessed, as is that of an Usurer for his money, is different from the love we have, or that we flatter our selves to have for the Truth.

4. An Usurer inclines continually towards gain; the means that are given him thereof enter always without resistance, they are alway received with a sincere Joy, and without opposition. There needs no studied management nor moderation to make them agreeable. Every man is welcome to propose them Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances, Strangers, Inferiors, Equals, Superiors; and he is far from conceiving any bitterness against those who make him any Overture to encrease his Wealth, it would be a certain means to sweeten him if he were angry at them. He does not amuse himself in finding out reasons to reject these advices, nor ever takes occasion to examin the defects of those who give them. He is not scrupulous in manners, in the behaviour, in the intentions. He only seeks to assure himself of the truth of what hath been told him, and examining it sincerely, he fears nothing but being deceived therein.

Behold

Behold in what manner we ought to love Truth, and the Model the Wise Man proposeth to us, in ordering us to seek it as Money; and we may see there that we love it so little and seek it so imperfectly, that the contrary to what we have said of this Usurer may be said of us.

For our hearts are hardly ever open on that side Truth presents it self. It finds there always resistance, and never enters but by violence and force; and if sometimes it be in appearance gratefully received, it is always with some inward remorse of some superficial joy, with which we distinguish it. No man is proper to make us know it, and self-love is almost never wanting to furnish us with Reproaches against those who undertake it. Rhetorick hath neither Cunning nor delicateness enough to insinuate it without hurting us. We always find excess in the things, defects in the Grace, in the manner, and in the time; and in stead of applying our mind sincerely to the examination of what is proposed to us, we apply it only in an unprofitable search of their defects who have given these Counsels. This is the portraiture of the Spirit, and the Conduct

duct of the most part of men. The lineaments are more observed in some than in others, but there are very few in whom some foot-steps of them do not appear.

5. At least let us not flatter our selves with a Virtue which we have not, and let us beware of saying, as many do, *That we desire nothing so much as to know our selves, and that they can do us no greater pleasure then to help us therein.* Let us on the contrary acknowledge that it would be to give to our selves a Praise which surpasseth man, and which could be nothing but the effect of our Vanity and our Blindness: So that the first step we shall make to get out of it is to acknowledge sincerely the opposition we feel in our selves against this self knowledge, and to weep for it before God as being one of our greatest misfortunes.

6. The second step which is no less essential is to acknowledge the impossibility we have of prospering in this search, without the assistance of Gods light. Because there is only this light which is able to dissipate the Clouds which cover our hearts, and it is only by means of it that we are capacitated

to Judge truly of what we discover therein, our motions being good or bad as they are for or against Truth, which is the rule of them. Lastly, there is none but God who can give us a knowledge of our selves, which is moderate to the just proportion our Infirmitie requires, that which we are able to procure purely by human force, being sometimes as dangerous as the ignorance it self of our State and Condition, because it is able to discourage the Soul, and bring her to a kind of Despair, whereas that which God gives her, upholds her at the same time that she other dejects her, and never shrinks back at the sight of her miseries, but is raised again by hope in the mercy of God.

7. But this persuasion, That we ought not to expect this knowledge so necessarily except from the pure Grace of God, doth in no manner exclude the reflections we must make to obtain it. For Grace is often hid under these reflections, and makes use thereof to make these lights enter into our minds. Therefore we must act in respect of this important Point of Christian life as in all others. That is to say, we must demand it of God as dependant on him only, and

and labour to get it as if it did depend only on our care: And it is in this consideration that we shall give here some Overtures which may be useful in this Enquiry.

8. There are two sorts of knowledge of man, the one general, the other particular. The first discovers what happens to all men in the state of sin wherein they are born; the other teacheth us what we have added to this common Corruption. Because though it may be the same in all at the Root, it takes nevertheless infinite several Shapes, accordingly as the Soul forsakes them more or less, and that Concupiscence being limited and excited by occasions and objects, diffuseth it self more on the one side then the other, so that by this different mixture of particular disorders, it forms it self as many several Diseases and Conditions, as there are different Souls.

It is, without doubt, to this particular knowledge of our condition that we ought to incline. For it would help little or nothing to contemplate the general Portraiture of the corruption of Nature; if we make not use of it to trace out our own, seeing that it may
be

be a means to cure us particularly, and not men generally. But the knowledge of the common condition of men is nevertheless very useful; and comprehends likewise the greatest part of this particular knowledge which we seek. For these defects and these Vices do not cease, for being common, to be the Vices and the Defects of each of us; they subsist not in the Air, nor in some being separated from us. They are in us, and render each of us as miserable as if none other had them.

9. We cannot propose a more proper Image to present the State of man corrupted by Sin then that which the Scripture useth to express that of *Jerusalem* by, in saying, That from the head to the foot there was not in it one sound part; *a planta pedis usque ad Verticem, non est in ea Sanitas*. Let us then imagine an universal Wound, or rather, a heap of Sores, Plagues, and Ulcers, wherewith mans Body is covered over in a horrid and frightful manner; Let there be amongst these Sores some that seem to be more venomous and enflamed; others that look as it were dead and without heat, but that have nevertheless this which is common, that they may
all

all become Mortal, these same which seem almost Cured being able to enflame themselves afresh by divers inward and outward causes sufficient to produce this effect, this man having no means or force to hinder it. Behold the Image of the State wherein we are born, and what we are by Nature. The love of our selves which is the Center and Fountain of all our Maladies gives us a violent inclination for Pleasures, for Promotion, for all that doth nourish our Curiosity, to fill up thereby the terrible vacuity which the loss of our true happiness hath caused in our hearts. And this Inclination disposes us to procure these three objects of our desires, by all sorts of means, how unjust and how criminal soever they may be.

But as these objects are changed a thousand ways, acting more or less upon our imaginations and our senses, the motives by which the Soul is swayed thereto are also very different: And it is that which makes the variety of our passions. Therefore the divers assemblings and the several degrees make the difference of the particular humors and dispositions of men. Some are more Criminal, others more Innocent according

ding to their objects, some more lively,
 others more languishing, according as
 they behave themselves. There are some
 likewise which appear absolutely extin-
 guished, because the heart is Lorded over
 by a contrary Passion. And these are
 the wounds without inflammation, and
 almost cured, whereof we were speak-
 ing even now. But we must not rely
 thereon absolutely; For they never are
 so well closed up, but that they may
 be venomed again. How far soever we
 may be from certain Vices, there re-
 mains always nevertheless in us inclina-
 tion enough to make us fall therein, if
 God did permit that the thoughts which
 might dissuade us should be taken away
 from our mind, that the objects which
 might incline us thereunto should ac-
 tively upon us, and lastly that there should
 be a heap of outward Circumstances
 able to provoke our Concupiscence, and
 to turn it on that side, which hath oc-
 casioned St. Augustine to establish this
 fine Rule, *That of all the sins that men*
commit, there is not one that another man
would not commit, if he were not assisted by
Him who made Man. Nullum Peccatum
facit homo, quod non facit alius homo, si non
adjuvet Rector a quo factus est homo,

10. Let us therefore never flatter our selves with a clear exemption from any vices, and acknowledge in us this unfortunate aptness to all the Crimes and disorders of men. Let this consideration never permit us to raise our selves above any one whomsoever. Let it humble us by all the disorders and by all the defects which we shall observe in others, being that they are ours in some sort by an inclination we have thereunto, and by an impossibility we are in of securing our selves from them unless God preserve us. Thus the History of man which comprehends almost nothing but that of their Passions, their weakness, and their disorders, will in some sort become our own History; and whereas it is for the most part of people only a vain and idle recreation, it will be for us, if we will consider it in this sense, a very solid Instruction, which will continually set our faults before our eyes, and make us acknowledge either that which we are really, or what we may come to if God leave us to our selves.

11. It is by these reflections which we ought to make without intermission upon all we see, and learn by mens disorders, that we must endeavour to conceive

ceive more distinctly the corruption of our nature. For it does not Justifie to have only a confused and a general *Idea* of it, like those we have already drawn. We must consider particularly the several parts and the effects that depend thereon, and strive to know thoroughly the injustice, the vanity, and the weakness of the nature of man, the progress and the effects of his Passions, in applying our selves always to these common knowledges, and not contenting our selves to acknowledge simply that we have the Root and the Source of these defects, endeavour moreover to discover what these Roots have produced in us, and even to what degree they are living.

12. But as the disorder and Injustice of man are only deprivations of the order wherein he ought to be, and of the Justice in which he ought to remain firm, it is clear that it cannot be known as it ought to be, whilest we are ignorant of this Order and this Justice, that is to say, of the Divine and Eternal Laws which rule and govern mens Duties, and from whence they cannot be separated without falling into disorder and injustice. But it is not here in this place that

that we intend to treat of it thoroughly, it is rather the substance, absolutely of Morality than of a small Writing like this here; and we will content our selves to propose in general some advices, to avoid in the study we must make all our lives, the voluntary digressions, and the crafty and subtil fetches wherein the aversion for Truth doth ingage us unknown to our selves, or rather without acknowledging that we were aware of them.

13. Amongst the Rules which prescribe mens Duties, and concerning which they shall be judged, there are some generally known, as for Example, that Murder, Theft, Adultery, Fornication, False witnesses, are actions very Criminal; and others on the contrary concerning which there is some difference betwixt those who engage themselves in the deciding these kind of questions.

I do not by this difference pretend to take away the certainty and evidence of these contended Rules. For I know that there are some which are no less clear and certain then Principles the most generally received by all men, and of which Rules there is no doubt but by mistake of application or by blindness

ness of Passion and Malice. I will only mark the fact, and distinguish the truths of Morality in these two Classes, by relation not to their real evidence, but to the effective disposition of men, who have embraced the one unanimously, and who are divided in regard of the other.

I place likewise in the same rank with these contested Rules those, which although little oppugn'd by writings and discourse, are nevertheless by practice, and which many who would pass and be thought to lead a Christian-like life, do not forbear to violate by their carriages; not ceasing, for all that, to find out Confessors who do tolerate them, or who do approve them, and without losing the esteem of Persons who are very regular. There are, for example, very few Confessors who would authorise, by a formal decision, Balls, Comedies, Romances, the immodest manner Women dress themselves in now a days, the use that is made commonly of the Goods belonging to the Church, the seeking after Ecclesiastical Dignities. Nevertheless seeing that so many, who have some Conscience, make no scruple of all these things, there must needs be

be Confessors who find nothing to say against them, and who believe them not obliged to forsake them.

14. Whosoever desires to know himself ought to be Instructed and well Versed in these two kind: of Truths, seeing that it is thereby that he ought to judge of himself and his condition. And it is very easie to do it in the respect of the first; because there's no need but that we seriously wish it. These truths are exposed to all those who desire to be informed of them; they are to be found every where. But if it is easie to learn them after a speculative manner, it is not so easie to make use of them as a light to discover the very bottom of the heart, and to judge of our actions. Because self-love, which cannot hinder them always from entring into the memory, acts so that they continue fruitless therein, that is to say, that they never serve for Rules to us, that we never compare our action with them, that we never draw the most natural and certain consequences from them, that they never come into our mind but when we are compelled to discourse of them; and lastly that we look upon them not different from those opinions of the ancient

ancient Philosophers, which we are glad to keep as a Pledge in our memory as points of knowledge and erudition, but by which we do not think to rule our lives.

This disposition of our hearts must be considered as one of our greatest mischeifs, making Truth, which should be the remedy, to serve only to augment them by the bad usage we make of its light. For not being given us but as our Guide, we become unjust Possessors of it, when we do not use it for this end. We ought therefore to attempt all means to remedy this evil; and so how remote soever we may imagine our selves from truth, it is necessary that we force our selves to draw nearer to it, and make use of it as a Torch to search in the most hidden corners of our soul all that may be contrary thereto.

15. But if self-love have subtilty enough to stop in the most part of the world the effect of the most constant Truths, and whereof we are the most convinced, it does yet shift off more easily those which are disputed, either by contrary opinions formally maintained, or by an opposite practice. For it is
the

the cause either that people, remaining in a doubt, do nevertheless act as if they were very certain of what they must believe in that disagreement of opinions, or that they do define for that party which favoureth their inclinations by so frivolous reasons that they are ashamed to tell them when they are obliged, or that they blindly follow the example of others, without so much as ever examining whether this example be satisfactory or not, or whether they may be freed from it before God in alledging to him that they have followed the common tract, and at last they know so well how to stop in this point their curiosity, that they apprehend nothing more then to see it too clearly.

It is not my design to decide here any of these points which I have called Contested, because there may be found persons in the Church who oppose them, either as their opinions, or as practicing them. I say only that the quiet wherein those live who follow some base opinions without ever having examined them seriously, is visibly unreasonable, and cannot come except from the corruption of the heart, from a hatred for
Truth,

Truth, and from a desire which they have to satisfy their Passions, not being troubled for it by remorse of Conscience; and lastly from a fear of being obliged to Condemn themselves in respect of the time past, and to change their manner of living for the time to come. 'Tis that which stifles their fear, and hinders them from having, in regard of their Salvation, the same Sentiments which they approved in regard of all other things. If some able Physicians did tell them that such certain meats were poisoned, they would willingly abstain from eating of them, before they were assured that these Physicians were mistaken. If they had notice given them, That there was a Design of taking away their lives, that the houses were on Fire, they would give little or no belief to those who should tell them the contrary, without bringing them very good proof; they would not be wanting to dive into the bottom of these advices, nor could they be at quiet with themselves until they should be absolutely cleared of the truth thereof. From whence happens it then that when they hear that rational and understanding persons are convinced, That some things they practice are not

permitted, that they are capable to destroy them, that they are Condemned by the Law of God, as being Crimes, they are nevertheless so little moved thereat, that all seems to assure them? From whence comes it that they take so little pains to examin to the bottom the occasion of this Judgment or Opinion which is against them, or to discourse any of those who are perswaded of it, but that they stop at certain superficial reasons, and that provided they see themselves Authorized by a Rabble, whom other times they esteem very little either for Judgment or Piety, they think they have nothing to fear? Who sees not that 'tis their Passion that suspends their Reason, and hides from them the most common rules of Sense, which they cannot hinder themselves from seeing, if they were not as it were tyed by their heart, which fears to be disturbed in its Inclinations?

That which we ought to do to avoid this disorder so visible and so proper to cast us into, and keep us in blindness, is to establish, for an inviolable Principle of our Conduct, never to follow in the practical any of those opinions favourable to the inclination of Nature, and
which

which are condemned by able men, unless we be fully assured that these men be deceived, and in an excess of security. Otherwise we shall not be able to free our selves from rashness, and the unadvised Acts which we commit by following a Rule so preposterous ought to be a warning for us that we deceive not our selves even in the bottom, and that 'tis the aversion we have for Truth that hinders us from acknowledging it.

17. It would not be sufficient to advance in the knowledge of ones self to be only instructed in the Principles of Truth, by which we ought to judge of our Actions, and of our State and Condition. Because, provided that we had never so little Sincerity to make the application of it, 'twould not be possible at least that our gross faults should remain absolutely unknown to us. But to form to our selves the *Idea* which ought to be had thereof, there must be added to the knowledge of Gods Laws that of his Grandeur, of his Bounty the infinite obligations we have to him, the Right which he hath over men in quality of Creator and Redeemer. There must be added the necessary Consequences of Sin, and we must look upon our

selves as Sinners reduced to the last degree of unworthiness and annihilation. *Vide Domine, & considera, quoniam sum vilis*; As deserving that all Creatures rise up against us, as being unworthy of all the Consolations and Comforts, of all the Assistance which we receive of him, and lastly as having no right to complain of any bad usage, because there is none which we do not deserve. | ut if we compare afterward those opinions which our Condition requires of us with those we really have, with this violent inclination for greatness, will this niceness and sensibility even in small and trivial things, with this Tiranical propensity, to be obnoxious to all men, and to relate all to our selves, it is impossible that we should not be amazed at so strange a Deposition, and so opposite to Reason and Justice.

18. Although these Considerations may be useful to all the World, they are nevertheless proper particularly to those who return to God after great Strayings. But there is another study of ones self much more tedious and difficult, and which makes the exercise of the Just even during their whole life. It consists in knowing those Passions,

Hu-

Humors, weakneses, defects, deceits, which self-love makes use of to hide them both from our selves, and others, and the secret Injustices wherein this Self-love engages us. 'Tis to what each one is obliged to apply himself unto with Care, as to the chief means to advance himself therein. For all the faults of the Just, as well the small ones as the important ones, do happen ordinarily, only because they do not know themselves enough, that they do not themselves justice enough, and that they dissemble, and keep close a great part of their faults from themselves.

19. The perswasion wherein one ought to be as to the importance of this Duty, and the application to practise it, which ought to spring from it, will make one presently discover a great number of faults. For it is certain, that that which ordinarily causes that the most part of our faults are unknown to us, is because as soon as we perceive any of them, we look another way, taking them for objects which incommode us, and so they make little or no impression upon our Minds. Likewise we look upon them only separately, as if we had only the fault which we are forced to see at

that very moment. All those we have observed in passing by, remain as it were annihilated in regard of us. The inclinations and customs which remain, we reckon as nothing, and stopping also only at simple actions, and yet as slightly as possibly we can, we never have time to form an Idea of our selves, which is very humble.

We can make no progress in the study of our selves, but in correcting this fault, and taking a quite contrary way, which is to force the Mind to consider its faults and imperfections, with a serious application to annex one to another, according as they are discovered to endeavour to search to the bottom of it, to examin the cause of the passions, not to think they can be easily destroyed, being sometime without action, and to make use of this Image to humble our selves before God and Man.

In a word, we must act in this Study almost, as if we had undertaken to labour all our life time to draw our Portraictures, that is to say, we must add every day some strokes with the Pencil, but not put out what is already drawn therein ; so we shall observe sometimes one passion, sometimes another. To
day

day we shall discover one delusion of Self-love, to morrow another. And by that means we shall form by little and little a Portraiture so like, that we shall see every moment even what we are, so that we shall have reason to say continually to our selves, behold what I am. See here what I have loved so much, and could wish that the whole World might be the object of its esteem and affection.

20. We must not forget, amongst the multitude of our faults, those which being only outward and involuntary, render us not properly guilty before God. For those are they, which oftentimes humble us the most in our own thoughts, because we are so vain, that we ordinarily judge of our selves, rather according to the report of men than truth. Moreover, these Faults rendring us incapable of certain actions and employments, ought to have place in the deliberations, which we make of entring or not entring into diverse engagements which might be proposed to us.

Lastly, as they make commonly many Impressions upon the minds of others, we are obliged to be very circumspect therein, because we ought partly to re-

gulate our behaviour concerning this Impression, which opens to us, or shuts the entrance to their Hearts, and disposes them to stumble, or not to stumble at our Actions.

21. Faults and Vertues ought equally to be the object of this Examen; because we must endeavour to know the extent, and the greatness of these Faults; and the limits and imperfections of these Vertues. The one and the other is necessary to form a true Idea of our selves, and we are equally deceived in the one and in the other, by the inclination Self-love gives us to hide, or lessen what we have that's naught, and to expose to view, or to encrease what we have that's good.

22. We ought not to judge simply of the greatness, and the extent of these faults in relation to the consequences, and the effects they have had, but in relation to the consequences and the effects they may have, if God hinder them not; because there is no passion but may be the cause of our utter ruin. Inconstancy, a little motion of choler, a word of vanity, an inordinate desire, a want of circumspection may oftentimes be followed with consequences which may change
the

the whole state of our life. We shall know it clearly in the next world, and God will let us see there, that he hath made us escape a world of dangers, into which, the weight of our Concupiscence would have drawn us headlong; if he had not stopped the course of it. And we may likewise know some part thereof in this life, if we reflect upon what might happen to us from all the faults which we have committed, and on the excesses whereunto our passions might have carried us, if they had been violently excited by the objects, and favoured by occasions, and not hindred by the obstacles, which God placed there to keep them within certain boundaries, which make us acknowledge, that 'tis not through our moderation and wisdom, that we have escap'd these great inconveniences, but meerly by Gods mercy.

23. We must take away in the Examen of Vertues which we believe we have, what there is purely natural, and wherein Grace hath no share at all. For God, who ought to be the rule of all our judgments, makes no account of what comes from Nature. The effects of custome and habit, which is nothing but another

Nature must be taken away. There must be an absolute depriving our selves from the desire we have to please Men, and from other secret considerations from interests and passions, because all that is very bad. We must separate from it what we have destroyed by our ingratitude, and our sins, because, that not subsisting in the eyes of God, ought not to subsist in ours. We must consider how many of these Vertues, such as they are, have little extent, force and solidity: with how small zeal we carry our selves therein, and after all these separations, we must ask our selves what we have yet remaining.

24. Not only good Qualities, and Virtues are nothing in the sight of God; being destroyed by Crimes, but without having committed any, they become often useless, and even render us culpable by the little use we make of them. Because the gifts of God include always some new obligation. He expects more from those, to whom he hath given most. We owe him for the interest of his Favours and Graces; and if we fail to give it him, he would rather we had not received them. If he hath given us a favourable natural Condition; if he hath pre-

preserved us from temptations which carry away most part of others; if we have had little to contest within our selves; if he hath given us some good qualities of mind, some propensity, and inclination to vertue; Lastly if he hath bestowed on us vertue it self, we ought to look upon all that as Talents from God, yet only conditionall to encrease them, so that if we know we have not performed it, there is nothing ought to give us more confusion and fear.

25. We ought above all to consider the ill use we have made of all the Truths God hath been pleased to discover to us, be it in the elevating us thereby inwardly or outwardly, be it in prophaning them by indiscreet entertainments, or that we make use of them not to condemn or despise our selves, but others. For that is the use, or rather the most common abuse, that men make thereof. 'Tis impossible that those who know the Truths of the Gospel, should not see at the same time, how little they are observed by a great many, who at other times make profession of Piety. We may see that they want light in many points, and that they commit divers considerable faults.

And

And malice placing it self on that side, takes delight in busying it self about these defects. It exaggerates them, it stuffs it self with them, and thereby dissuades the Mind from whatever might be able to edifie it in those, in whom we observe them. Every thing wounds and shocks these so clear-sighted, but little charitable Men; If a Monastery do not follow the rules prescribed by the Canons of the Church, they do no more good in it, they busie themselves only in that, and make no accompt of what it hath otherwise of God. They have reason in what they condemn, but they have not to condemn it with so little meekness, humility and charity: so that they blame things oftentimes after a manner more blamable than the evil it self, by which they are hurt.

26. We may say that 'tis nothing but the want of will, which is able to prevent that we arrive not at this degree of Self-knowledge, being we imagin that Men do not apply themselves to this Examen, except in visible faults. What remains is more difficult, because it is active in giving means to discover those which we cannot find in our selves, either for want of judgment, or else through

through the devices of Self-love. We hardly see any one, in whom we do not think to find some faults which are unknown to him; and as we ought to judge thereby, that this Illusion is very common, the lest we can conclude of it is, that it is much to be feared, we are not more exempt from it than others.

We have likewise no reason to assure ourselves, that these secret and hidden faults are not very considerable, and never capable to hinder Salvation. This is by no means true; the blindness wherein we are, is able to hide very important ones from us. How many for example, do we see, who not knowing their want of Understanding, do undertake Employments, and therein commit very great faults. Men chuse their Occupations and Employments ill, they slight those which are proper for them, and apply themselves to others in which they cannot prosper. Men ingage themselves in contests which have evil consequences, they think they are in the right when they are in the wrong, and upon this score they deal hardly with others; they excite murmurings against themselves; they destroy the whole Edification, they
were

were able to give by their other actions. There are some, who for want of knowing what they have that's troublesome in their humors and conducts, raise a coldness, and a disgust in the hearts of others, who disunite by this means whole Societies, who divert Persons from their way, and stifle in them the seeds which God has sown therein. There are some who serve as obstacles (not dreaming of it) to many usefull and necessary things, because they do not know how to behave themselves in treating with them.

There are some, who by small ties, or wilfull preventions which they know not of, are hindred from satisfying these important Duties, the omitting of which becomes a scandal to those who see them act; and causeth great inconveniences. Lastly, it seldom happens, that these visible errors have not their beginning from those faults which men will not see.

27. This ought to suffice to make us joyn to the Examen, which we ought to make of our selves, what strength we can draw from others to know our selves better. There are several ways that it may be procured, but I shall only take notice

notice of the two principal ones which comprehend many others. The one is in some sort to go before Truth it self, seeking it in the example and the instructions of other People; the other to suffer that it approach us, in giving it a free access, and taking away all obstacles which may hinder this approach.

28. We seek truth in other Mens examples, by the reflections we make on their Actions, which extend to their Vertues, and to their faults: Their Vertues instruct us in those we want, they convince us of our weakness and of our baseness, and they humble us by this comparison. It is enough also, oftentimes that there be some difference of light and conduct betwixt others and us, to give us thereby means to undeceive our selves. Because altho Self-love perswades us at first, that we have reason on our side; yet if we observe that other Mens conduct hath ordinarily good success, and that ours on the contrary hath always bad, we should be wilfull to believe that we are not in the wrong.

29. 'Tis almost the only means to acknowledge in ones self what Men call false judgment, which is a defect that makes

makes Men undertake cross businesses, engages them in false parties, in various opinions, and in evil arguments. For altho this same lack of judgment, which produceth these false Opinions, may be a hinderance to the direct acknowledging them, yet if it happen, that a man had the fortune to observe, that generally he was single in his sentiment, and that his thought were almost alway contrary to every Bodies else, he must be extreemly opinionated, to conclude from thence that he is in the right. And thus the least he can do is to be mistrustfull of his Judgment, and of the quality of his Understanding, and to consult sincerely upon the Points, in which he shall have some particular advices, the most able, and most disinterested Persons he knows, by endeavouring in good earnest to embrace their Reasons.

30. It is by so much more important to endeavour to be edified by other mens Vertues, and good qualities, by how much more we ought to acknowledge in us an inclination which separates us from them. Our wickedness hides part of them from us, and makes us apply our selves to those which it cannot hide from us; we absolutely either forget them,

them, or we scarcely take notice of those who have them, in these circumstances ; on the contrary, their faults make very deep impressions in our minds. We conserve of them very lively images, which present themselves on their own accord without the trouble of seeking them, and we renew continually these images and impressions by new Reflections, to hinder them from losing any thing of their force and strength. However we ought to do the contrary, seeing that whereas there are very few, who are charged to remedy other Mens faults, there is none on the contrary, God does not oblige to profit by their Vertues. For he proposes them to all those who see them as a living and animated instruction, for which he will demand an accompt one day, as of all the other favours he hath done them.

But it is not forbid to observe in others certain visible faults, and it is likewise impossible not to see what strikes upon our senses, we must try to make use of them, thereby to know our selves better, and to the end we may draw this advantage from thence, we must first perceive some of those faults, we must ask our selves ; *Num quid ego unquam*

unquam Imprudens facio simile huic ? Did not I fall my self into these Faults, which I observe in this Man? The occasion of making these kind of reflections, are but too common; because Self-love, which has a thousand tricks to conceal from us our proper faults, hath no less to discover those of others. And whereas its delicateness does scarcely permit us to look stedfastly upon our own, it renders us on the contrary clear-sighted in respect of those of others. We see them such as they are; we consider them as much as we will, we hardly trouble our selves to lessen them by favourable excuses; this effect comes doubtless from some bad causes. But keeping them within their boundaries some profit may be drawn from thence, and use made thereof to deceive in some sort Self-love. For by considering thus the faults of others without this multiplicity of considerations, and artificial excuses, which deceive us in ours, we may easily discover what is the false light which dazles them, how they have engaged themselves in this Illusion, what they ought to do to be delivered from it. And afterwards, in turning all these Considerations towards our selves, we may

may easily apply them to our selves, if we have never so little sincerity, and desire to know our selves.

32. Unless we make use of this cunning to profit by the fault of another, which we cannot hinder our selves from seeing, they only blind us more instead of helping us to know our selves. For either we take occasion to slight those who fall therein by raising our selves above them, as if we were exempt, or if we acknowledge our selves guilty as well as they, we comfort our selves, that we alone are not subject to these Weaknesses. We are glad that they have not this advantage over us. We diminish the Idea we have of our own faults, as looking upon them common to many, and as being rather the consequences and infirmities of Nature than of our disorder. And thus we free our selves in some sort secretly from the reproaches of our Consciences, by hiding our selves in the throng of the Culpable.

33. But besides the Instructions which may be drawn out of other mens faults which we perceive by our selves, very important ones may likewise be drawn from the Judgments which we hear made

made of them by those who entertain themselves with them. For we may learn that 'tis in vain to dissemble our own, and be angry at those who speak of them; we thereby only apply people more to do it. Because whereas they are ordinarily very indulging to the Imperfections of those who seriously acknowledge them, they do not suffer on the contrary patiently those which we would hide or canonize, and of which they do not permit us to speak with freedom. Although they be something reserved in speaking with those, of whom they have some reason to be distrustful, they may find always some one to whom they may speak freely; so by this means things are dispersed in secret from one to another, almost as if they did speak them publickly. So that we must shew that the only way to hinder men from speaking of our faults is to Correct them our selves, or to Testifie that we desire it seriously, and that we are well pleased to be put in mind of them.

34. We may learn by these Judgments that hardly any one knows what is thought of him, nor what Impression his Actions make upon the minds of others.

others; from whence it happens, that in forming to our selves false opinions of their disposition, we take in conclusion false measures. We do not the Good we ought, nor prevent the Evil which we might; we disturb others a thousand several ways without knowing it, and we break thus by little and little all the ties which knit the union we have with them.

We perceive it well at the end of some of these bad effects, but that only increaseth the illusion we are in. For the lack of knowing the causes which are given them, we substitute false ones. We cast all the Blame on others, we attribute to them the Motives, Intentions, and Designs on which they never thought, and upon that we form of them very disadvantageous *Ideas*, which appearing without by some exterior marks do yet encrease the remoteness they have from us.

35. 'Tis true we must not absolutely rule our Conduct by the opinions and Impressions of others. But these Opinions and Impressions being uniform they give us often means to acknowledge, That this Conduct is not regulated according to Gods Laws; others being ordina-

ordinarily more subtil then we to discover what happens in us of Passion and Self-love. Even often times when these Impressions are unjust, they do not forbear to have some cause in us, the which we may remedy. In fine how unreasonable they are, as they may be either sharpen'd or sweeten'd by our Conduct, they may serve for obstacles to certain enterprises, and facilitate others, and we may sometimes take other courses to avoid them. It's always good to know them, provided we are able to undergo them.

36. We might obtain this advantage, and we might shun one part of the inconveniences if we did practice sincerely what is observed in *St. Thomas of Canterbury's* Life, which was that one of his Friends should advertise him of all that he found fit to tell him again in his Carriage. And it is what they had in Prospect who have ordered that in certain Religious Houses, That there should be one Person Charged to receive the complaints that each should make of the Superiors Behavior, to give him an account thereof, without naming the Authors. But as all the World cannot enjoy this Good we ought to endeavour
to

to supply it by procuring a faithful and understanding Friend to whom an entire liberty should be given to advertise us of what should be said of us in the World, and after what manner our actions might be taken therein.

37. It seems at first that the most part of the World do follow these advices, and that at least it is practiced by all persons who profess Piety. For there are none who have not a Confessor, and this Confessor ought to be that faithful friend who should advertise us of our faults, of the scandal which we cause, seeing that we give him that right in addressing our selves to him. He may know them so much better, as he joyns to the knowledge we give him of our selves, that which he sometimes may get elsewhere, and that thus he sees the limits of our light, that is to say, what we know of our selves, and what we know not. And as the practice of this Office of Charity makes one of the chief parts of his Ministry. There is hardly any one who does not flatter himself, That 'tis that he seeks in submitting himself to the Conduct of a Director, and who does not believe that he gives him in this point all the liberty which he can desire.

38. Whosoever will unfold these secret windings of his own heart, will find that although he think not to address himself to a Confessor except to draw from thence some help the better to know himself, he hath at the bottom of his heart a quite contrary end, and a secret design to make use thereof to Justifie himself in his faults, which is properly not knowing himself. This it is we do not take heed of to confess in our selves, seeing that on the contrary we know it not, and that we have also on the outward appearance of the mind a quite different thought. But Self-love which resides in the bottom of the Soul knows how to prosper there without our making any express reflections. See here the Artifice self-love makes use of. We have two sorts of faults, the first which are the object of our Affection, and which we will not acknowledge for faults for fear of being obliged to disanul them; the others that we really condemn are those which we have no inclination to, and from which we would very willingly be delivered. Self-love makes us therefore first choose a Ghostly Father, who ought to Judge of us almost as we would desire;

fire; Afterwards it makes as it were a kind of Covenant and Bargain with him. Self-love tells him the faults it loves not: it is content that he find fault with them, as it would it self. But the Object of its principal Passions it scarcely puts under the Censure of the Confessor, and only chooses him, thinking that he will not concern himself with them.

Therefore first we justify our Passions to our selves, and at last we seek a Ghostly Father to justify them. In a word we would have one who might not outgo us in direction, and who would conform in every thing, that is, we would he should approve and condemn what we our selves approve and condemn.

39. 'Tis that which is the cause that there being even amongst those who profess Piety so many strange and irregular Conducts, there is hardly any one nevertheless who wants a Director, if he will have one; and this Director is of no use to those that would choose him in this manner, but to stifle their remorses, and to make them live more quietly in the condition, out of which they have no desire to depart.

Thus we may define a Director in re-

F

spect

spect of the most part of the World, a charitable Censurer of small faults, and light defects, and an Approver of passions, which we will not remove. We would not have a Director who would not find fault at all, and we would not have one neither who touches upon our beloved passions. These two Conditions are both equally essential; because, as it would be troublesome, if he did pretend to contradict us in what we resolve absolutely to do, he would serve our Self-love but ill, if he did not contradict us in some thing, our intention being to make use of his zeal against certain faults, to authorise us in those we would not acknowledge for such.

40. Therefore 'tis not sufficient to have a Director, nor even to have one learned. We must moreover abandon our selves to him without dissimulation and artifice, and resolve to conform our selves to the judgment he makes of us, and not to incline him to follow ours. Lastly, we must be ready to learn from him to know our selves better, and be glad of his aid and assistance therein, without prescribing him limits. 'Tis the disposition all the World ought to be in; but 'tis not necessary that it be perfect,

perfect, or rather it is impossible that it should be so. Because there is no man upon Earth, who hath humility enough, and force to support, without being discouraged and afraid of the sight of the least sin in its natural greatness; and it is true to say of all our known sins in their greatest extent, what the Scripture said of God. *Non videbit me homo, & vivet.* Thus to take a proportionable Conduct, both of the necessity we all have of Truth, and to the weakness which renders us incapable of undergoing it in all its force, we must wish ardently to know it. We must embrace with docility what is discovered of it to us; we must believe that we are mightily spared, and labour nevertheless to become more strong, to the end we may be less obliged to spare our selves.

41. We would doubtless advance hugely in this self-knowledge, if we really had this disposition in the heart, by treating with the Confessor we have chosen. But we must however not grant only to this Confessor the right of discovering to us our faults, and the evil consequences of our actions. On the contrary, It would be just to stretch

this right as far as we can possible ; and to give it also in some sort to all the World, seeing there is not any to whom we are not answerable, and whom we are not able to hurt and scandalize. How circumspect soever a Confessor may be, he sees not always our actions ; he hears not all we say, he knows not always the impressions our words and our actions make upon others ; and it is scarcely, except from those who perceive them that they can be learnt. One should therefore learn the custom of being less delicate in this point, and give all the world an honest liberty. Possibly we should receive oftentimes advertisements less censurable. But if we will receive only those which shall appear altogether reasonable, we shall receive none at all. For men will never charge themselves with so severe an exactness, and they will much sooner loose the Party by saying nothing at all to us, than expose themselves to hurt us, if what they should say did not appear to us absolutely just.

We must on the other side suppose, that every one being prepossessed on the one part, that he loves not to be admonished of his faults, and on the o-
ther

ther unwilling to show any aversion upon him, is disposed by this means to free himself from rendring us this charitable office, and to tell us nothing what he thinks of us, nor what he knows others think of us. Thus except we remove this obstacle, and go as it were before Truth, in exciting others to tell it us, intestifying to them in an unsuspected manner, that we think our selves in some sort obliged that they should do it, and thus dispersing the fear they have of rendring themselves odious, they will always observe with us this deceitfull reservedness, which entertains and keeps us in ignorance of many things which would be very necessary to be known.

42. We must not imagin, that it is sufficient to receive without being moved, the advices which are given us, and to thank those who run the hazzard of giving us them. For it is well enough known to all the World, that, as it is a shame to shew that one is offended at them, so we endeavour to do our selves honour in being civil upon these occasions. But we must perswade People that these civilities are sincere; and it is that which cannot be without shunning many things; which the World take for marks of a

secret discontent and spite, which we are afraid to discover.

43. We must not pretend for example, that they ever take the liberty to advise us of any thing, if they see that we have no union and tye, but with those who enter absolutely into all our Sentiments; and that we testifie to all others nothing but driness and coldness.

If they see, that after this confidence which they shall have shewn us, we enter into a reservedness of mind, that we find our selves entangled every time we are with them, and that we act no more after a free and natural manner. If they see that to have more right to reject the Advice which is given us, we give an evil censure of it, that we seek every where for People, who condemn them by proposing them after an odious fashion; if we seek in the persons of those, who give them wherewith to decry their Judgments; if in occasions which present themselves, we speak of them with more sharpness then ordinarily. Lastly if they be aware, that that hath made a wound in our heart, let us be mindfull of it, and let us mingle on purpose in our Discourses

courses certain affected Apologies relating to the things we have been advertised of. If we do not avoid, say I, all those things which shew us to be inwardly grieved, we must not hope that they will stop at words of Civility, which are destroyed by so many marks of secret discontent, and those real.

44. 'Tis the sentiment of a wise Pagan, that he who is advertised of any fault, ought not to do the same presently, in respect of him from whom he doth receive this advertisement, and that he ought to expect an other time to render him this office. But this advice must be stretched much farther; for we must not only not reprehend upon the place those who reprehend us, but we must also avoid reprehending them when there is reason to suspect, that any secret spite should have open'd our eyes to see their faults, and made us attentive to observe them. We ought to suppose they are in pain to know the effect of the Advices they have given, and that they will perceive the least sign which we shall give of disapproving: That they will refer to this cause all they shall remark in us of coldness, and aversion to them, which might render

der these advices unprofitable to them, and give them leave to make a rash judgment of us. And this is it which obliges us to stand upon our guards on that side, and to testifie to them even more freedom and confidence, than we would have done at another time.

45. It is so much more important to preserve this conduct towards those, who run the hazard of giving us this Advice ; because in acting otherwise we do not shut the mouth only of one or two Persons, but almost generally to all the World. Because there needs but two or three rencounters of this nature, to get ones self the reputation of being very nice, and to pass in the minds of those who know us for People, who love not that we should speak freely to them. Now after this impression is formed, 'tis a very strong barr against Truth. Each man seeks pretences to free himself from the speaking to those Curious men. We fear always to disturb and vex them. Thus in doubt we ordinarily take the way of being silent, and to say nothing to them that may be disagreeable.

46. The Great ones and Princes complain, and Reason shews that they are misfe-

miserable in this, that their greatness is the cause that Truth dare not approach them, and that they pass thus all their life in Illusion. But certainly we have not less cause to complain in this point of the most part of those, who are in any esteem in the World. For they are not Princes by Birth, they are Princes by Humor, in dispersing amongst all those who come near them, certain terrors which hinder their most intimate Friends from speaking freely to them. From whence it happens, that oftentimes they are not informed what is made use of for entertainment to all the World; for they think to be approved in what is almost universally condemned, and lastly take almost in all things false measures.

47. It is much more important to avoid the appearing of this humor, because when this self Impression is given, even our Friends believe they are obliged by Charity to dissemble their Opinions, and to leave us to our own

wills. St. *Austin* complains *Aug. Epist. 250.* as of one of the chief difficulties which is met with in the

Commerce of this life, that when Men approve not something in the words or writings of some one, and that they dis-

cover to them this opinion in the belief that Christian liberty doth oblige us to make use of it thus, it happens often, that these Advices pass for effects of jealousie, rather than of amity. He represents these evil suspicions as a considerable fault, and at the same time very frequent, and he says that oftentimes they cause divisions and enmities amongst Persons very well united. Nevertheless, he cannot tell himself any other remedy for this evil, but by suppressing these Sentiments, when we have business with Friends of this humor. *If I can, said he to St. Jerome, expose freely to you what appears defective in your Writings, and that you cannot do the same in respect of mine, without rendring our selves suspected of distrust for one another, and of want of Friendship, let us rather leave all that, and not put our lives and Salvations in danger. Let something of science rather be wanting, which doth smell, provided that we hurt not Charity which doth edifie. And in another of his Letters, Methinks, saith he, we ought to treat together not only with Charity, but also with Liberty and Friendship, and that thus we ought not to dissemble what may be displeasing in our Writings, provided that we do it with a Spirit which*

God

God approves in Brotherly Charity. But if you think that we cannot use this conduct one towards the other, without the danger of hurting Charity, we shall do better to abstain from it. For altho this sort of Charity, which I desired we might practise together, be very excellent; nevertheless, it is better to entertain our selves in this other to which you have reduced me, than to have none at all. *Ille enim Charitas quam tecum habere vellem major est profectio, sed melior hæc minor quam nulla est.* If a Saint found himself obliged to do thus towards another Saint, we see easily that we may well be reduced to do it towards others, and thus even Charity demands sometimes, that we live in this reserve with our Friends, when they give no more overture to discover to them their Sentiments.

48. Besides the reputation of delicateness, there is yet another which strangely hinders even our Friends from speaking freely with us, 'tis that of being tyed to our own Sense, and strongly opiniated of our thoughts. Because having given this Idea of our selves, hardly any body ventures to gainsay us, especially if we have some consideration which perswades Men to deal wariy with

with us. Thus every one is reserved, and leaves us to believe what we have a mind, mocking often at us inwardly. But they will say; Is it only that we may not pass for Opinators in the minds of those, who would be believed in all they propose; that we shall be forced to grant, that we approve Opinions which in effect we do not, and yeild to all the Advices the first comer shall think good to give us? 'Tis by this means that People justifie in themselves and flatter themselves, that their stubbornness, and their inflexibility in their Sentiments, proceed only from the love they have for Truth. But it is easie to convince them, that one may avoid the reputation of being tied to ones own sense, without approving all the thoughts of others, which would be a very great fault. To do this, 'tis but to distinguish reasonable Certainty which is a Vertue, from Self-opinion which is a vice.

49. We cannot justly force whomsoever he be, to yeild to our Judgments, not being convinced, nor yet accuse him of being obstinate. Because if it is through knowledge that he is not persuaded of it, he is praise-worthy for
not

not yeelding to what is false; If it is lack of understanding, and of light he may accused of these faults, but not of that of being obstinate. Also the world does not commit this injustice, when we give it elsewhere what it hath a right to exact from us. See here in what it consists. Tho men in this life be not absolutely incapable of knowing any truth certainly; yet there are so many things which they see but obscurely, and they are so often deceived in taking that for a certainty, which indeed is not so, in considering objects confusedly, and in not seeing therein all that is necessary to judge by, that the least they ought to do, is to have a general distrust of their sentiments and thoughts, when they are not expressly confirmed by Faith, and the Authority of the Church. This distrust causes not them to be indetermin'd, and that they do not take some part, but it hinders them from proposing their thoughts with a determinative Air, and to be troubled when they are contradicted. This distrust makes them give ear, and examine seriously the reasons alledged against their Opinions. Lastly, it makes them slight the Opinions they approve not of,

of, with so much Modesty, that were main perswaded that they should have disposed to embrace them, if they had had light enough to penetrate into the Reasons. This is the disposition the World doth force from us, and with Reason, because we ought to have it in effect. And the contrary to this disposition, that is to say, that assurance which excludes even general distrust, that determinative Air, that manner of rejecting other mens Opinions without taking almost the pains to examin them, as if they were incapable of finding out the Truth, or of being deceived, is that properly, which men call being Opiniator.

'Tis that which repulses the World, and hinders it from speaking freely to us, because 'tis always imagin'd that it would be in vain, for when we have espous'd a cause, we never forsake it; but after having contested soundly, we always think that we have Reason, and that others have not. Thus every one had rather leave all in that Condition, and abandon us to our own light without proposing theirs to us.

50. We produce almost the same bad Effects, if without contesting and shewing

ing wilfulness, we remain nevertheless in a certain coldness, without appearing either to approve or disapprove the liberty which our Friends take in telling us their opinions. For as they are naturally inclin'd to believe, that this liberty is not pleasing to us, and that they are in distrust upon this point; Whosoever destroys not this Impression by his Air, and by his way of answering, gives leave to believe, that he would willingly that it may subsist or remain, and his silence being taken with probability for a token of discontent, the World thinks it self freed from making for the future the like attempts.

51. If we be carefull to avoid these, and such like faults, we may engage our true Friends to tell us sometimes what they think of our Actions, and to let us know after what manner the World takes them. But to judge well of what they tell us we must observe this rule, that as Natural Complacency, fear of troubling, and civility it self, obliges those who speak to us of our faults to moderate themselves much in their expressions; If we will know their Judgment exactly, we must add of our selves what is wanting in their words, and not imagin

imagin that these thoughts come into their mind with all these restrictions, and these mollifications which they use in proposing them to us. Let us endeavour therefore, that they tell us only some small part of what is judged of us, and that we must multiply in some sort all that is said of us to find out the Truth. If they tell us, that they have some little to contradict in ^{to} some thing we have done, that signifies that there is therein much to be gainsaid. If they say they make some difficulty in some Argument, that means that they believe it false and ridiculous. If they tell us that they cannot without difficulty enter into any of our thoughts, that is, they disapprove and condemn them. If they give us notice that there are some People who harm themselves by certain Actions, that is to say, there are a great number who are scandalized at them. Lastly, it must be supposed that the language of Advertisements is a particular Language; that we do express ourselves therein but by halves; that they are nothing but perpetual Glances, and that unless we supply and understand it at half Sentences, we are deceiv'd by those even who strive to undeceive us.

If

52. If man had as much subtilty and craft for what relates to his Happiness as generally he hath for his Interests, he would not only discover the Truth from under some little Clouds, the goodness and Prudence whereof might serve to sweeten and temper it, but he would even distinguish it in the most profound obscurity of Fiction and dissimulation. We alter it by the fiction of flatteries; we dissemble it by silence; But very often it relies only on us to distinguish it in the one and the other. Because there is always something of Truth in flattery it self, and Silence hath also its Language; which hath caused St. Hier. Ep. 3. *Jerom* to call the silence of St. Aselle, *Silentium loquens*.

53. To Comprehend what there may be of Truth in flattery we need only to distinguish the precise sense of expressions from the thoughts which they give us leave to read in the mind of those who make use of them. There is no Truth at all in the precise sense of the expressions of Flatterers, seeing that we take here the term of Flattery for a false Praise. But they give leave to know many of their thoughts, and to instruct

instruct us by these thoughts of many Truths which concern us.

The first is, when they give these Praises, they believe the quite contrary what they say, and contemn as much in their hearts those to whom they give them as they do testifie outwardly esteem for them.

The second is drawn from the nature of some Praises which they choose. For they take ordinarily the substance of things truly Praise-worthy, which they falsely attribute to those they desire to flatter. Thus those to whom whom we give Praises ought not to conclude from thence neither, That they have these qualities effectively which are attributed to them, nor that there are people who believe it, but only these qualities are Praisable in themselves, and that it were to be wished that they had them, that is to say, that they might learn by that not what they are, but what they ought to be. 'Tis a reflexion St. *Augustine* made upon the Praise *Cicero* gave to *Cæsar*, To forget nothing but Injuries, *Nihil oblivisci nisi Injurias*. Dicebat hoc, said he, tam magnus Laudator, aut tam magnus Adulator, sed si Laudator talem *Cæsarem* noverat, si autem Adulator, talem esse debe-

re ostendebat Principem Civitatis, qualem illum fallaciter pradicabat. What Cicero said to Cæsar, said this Father, was either a great Praise, or a great Flattery: If it was a Praise he ought to believe that Cæsar was really such an one: If it was a flattery he shewed always thereby, that he who Commands an Estate ought to have these qualities which he attributed falsely to Cæsar.

The third thing that Flattery teacheth us is of the same kind as the first. 'Tis, that the Flatterer believes not only what he says, but he imagins moreover that he whom he flatters is Fool enough to let himself be deceived by his flatteries, and to take them for sincere Praises. And as we cannot approve false Praises but by flattering our selves, every Flatterer condemns, in himself, of illusion and vanity, that man to whom he addresses his flatteries. This is the Judgment of it. Lastly, as it is by Interest and not by inclination that we are inclined to flattery, and that we make use thereof only as a means to obtain of the great ones what we pretend, flatterers must judge, That those to whom they give these false Praises are mightily in love with themselves to be gained by

by such gross deceits. So that if all that is in the mind of a Flatterer were laid open and explicated, it might be reduced to this strange Complement. Sir, I believe nothing of these Praises I give you, I have for you all the just disdain you deserve; but knowing that you are vain enough to believe that men have in their hearts the Sentiments of Esteem which I shew you, and that the excess of love you have for your selfe will be able to dispose you to do me the favours I desire, I thought that to obtain them, I ought to attempt a way which ought to bring the contrary. Behold what the Great may see in the minds of most people who Praise them, if they can add to the expression of these Flatterers what they are able to gather from their thoughts. But as that would incommode them, they had rather penetrate less, and stick at the appearances of words. And 'tis by the knowledge men have of this disposition that they run the hazard to use this wicked means.

54. The language of silence, is what silence it self makes known in the minds of those who are silent for certain Considerations. For Example, when we avoid speaking of a certain fault before Great men, that signifies we believe them

them subject to it, and that we are afraid, lest they should take to themselves what might be said of it. In like manner, when in their presence we omit to praise certain Persons, it is interpreted, that we imagin they love them not, and that they have a prejudice against them. Thus they need but to observe the Discourses that are forbidden before them, to know what prejudices, and what faults are laid to their charge. And as nothing is spoken of so much in mens absence, as things which we dare not speak in their presence, they may also judge by these Discourses which we never make before them, what are those which are often discoursed of when we are far removed from them.

55. The practice of these means is not only usefull to make us know many defects which we are ignorant of, but it is very proper to obtain of God the assistance of his Lights in this study of our selves to which we apply our selves. Nevertheless what progress we may make therein, we must not pretend ever to arrive at that pitch of knowing our selves perfectly. Man hath always in his heart so long as he is in this life;
some

some abuses impenetrable to all these diligent searches. And it is likewise one part of the Knowledge we may have of our selves, to comprehend that we do not know our selves with assurance, in what even appears most Essential, and most important. For we never know certainly what is called the bottom of the Heart, or that first propensity of the Soul, which makes her either belong to God or the Creature. I would say, that we know not certainly that we belong to God, altho we may know assuredly that we are not so.

We know not with an entire assurance the Habitation of God in the Soul, as in his Temple, because 'tis an attendant of the first Propensity of the Heart.

We know not absolutely in the particular actions, whether the Love of God is the Principle of them, or whether Nature and Custom did not borrow the Form of the Love of God.

None knows absolutely if his sins be forgiven, he knows not the precise degree of his weakness or force, he knows not what God imputes, or not imputes to us of the continual productions of our Concupiscences.

Lastly,

Lastly, We know not evidently either the nearness or the remoteness of God. For often we think we have Grace, when the Mind is taken up only with thoughts, and quite natural motions, and often even we take for motives of Nature true Operations of Grace.

We ought therefore suppose, that with all our Study, and all our diligent Scrutinies, we shall always remain unknown to our selves in this Life. But as this necessary Ignorance is in the Order of God, we bear it humbly, and believe likewise that it is necessary for us to continue therein. There is nothing but voluntary Ignorance that we ought to shun, because it is contrary to this Order.

56. In a word, we ought not to desire to know our selves more than God pleaseth. And God will not that we know our selves more than is necessary to make us humble, and to govern our selves. Thus every Application to dive to the bottom of the Heart, which is not inclosed within its limits, is not agreeable to God, nor usefull to us.

We must not therefore busie our selves in such a manner about our faults, lest

lest that under pretence of avoiding Presumption, we fall into despair and trouble. Therefore whatever may be said of this Portraiture, which we must attempt to make of our selves, if it happen nevertheless that we were so frightened at these Objects, that the Soul might thereby be overwhelmed, it would be better a great deal to turn it another way, and to busie it only about Gods Mercies.

57. Care yet ought to be had in the whole Examination of our actions and interior motions, to do our selves the same justice that we think we are obliged to do to others, that is to say, not to condemn our selves without Evidence.

It is true, that we are ignorant whether our better Actions are good and agreeable to God, but yet we know much less whether they are disagreeable.

There are intermixt therewith many human and corrupted Considerations, but we cannot tell whether they be voluntary, and what part thereof we have, whether they are not pure motives of Concupiscence, which God doth not impute to us, or temptations of the Enemy which render us yet less guilty.

We

We acknowledge in us a great stock of Corruption, but this stock whatever it be, doth not render us guilty when there is another stock of the Love of God and Justice, which possesseth our hearts.

We have committed, and we commit hourly an Infinity of faults, but God pardons also hourly this infinity of faults, when we return to him with a true and sincere humility. And thus we cannot tell whether these faults do subsist before his eyes.

What therefore must be done in this Ignorance? We must humble our selves under the Hand of God, but not condemn our selves; because that would be to attribute to our selves a Knowledge which we have not.

58. Lastly, The principal Precaution that ought to be had in the study of ones Self, is, not to apply ones self so absolutely to it, but joyn it always with the infinite Mercies of God, which surpass so much all our miseries, that they are only as a drop of water in the Ocean. 'Tis therefore in this immense Sea that we must drown them, with an entire confidence. Considered in themselves they are great, but compared to

G

the

the infinite Greatness of Gods Love for us, and the price he hath given to deliver us, they are nothing. They ought to humble us without casting us down, as the Mercy of God to comfort us without elevating us. God was willing to give us these two great objects of our misery and his Mercy to keep our Soul in *Æquilibrio*, or even ballance. There is always danger in considering the one without the other, but the union of these two Considerations establish the Soul in the true state, wherein she ought to be during this Life, which is that of the wholsom fear grounded upon the consideration of our miseries, and a humble confidence maintained by Gods Mercy.



The Second Treatise.

Of Charity and Self-love.



1. **A**Ltho there is nothing so opposite to Charity which relates all to God, as Self-love which relates all to it self, yet there is nothing so resembling the effects of Charity, as those of Self-love. For it marches so by the same ways, that one can hardly point out those better whereunto Charity ought to carry us, than in proposing those which Self-love takes, which knows its true Interests, and inclines by reason to the end it proposes it self.

2. This conformity of Effects in Principles so different, will not appear strange to those who shall have well

considered the nature of Self-love. But to know it he must first consider Self-love in it self, and in its first bent, that he may see afterwards what carrieth him to disguise and hide it from the sight of the World.

3. The name of Self-love is not sufficient to make us know its nature, being we may love our selves divers ways. We must add thereunto other qualities to form to our selves a true Idea of it. These qualities are, that Man doth not only love himself, but he loves himself without limits, and without measure; loves only himself, and refers all to himself. He covets all sort of Riches, Humors, Pleasures, and desires none but for, or in relation to himself. He makes himself the Center of all; he would Lord it over all, and could wish that all Creatures were only employed to content him, to praise him, and to admire him. This tyrannical disposition being stamped in the bottom of all mens Hearts, renders them violent, unjust, cruel, ambitious, flatterers, envious, insolent and quarrellous. In a word, it includes the seeds of all the crimes, and of all the misdemeanors of men, from the smallest, even to the most detestable

testable ones. See here what a monster we harbour in our bosoms. This monster lives, and reigns in us absolutely, except God destroy its empire by putting another love into our hearts. It is the Principal of all our actions, which have no other then corrupted Nature: And so far is it from terrifying us that we love, and hate all things which are out of us, only as they are conform or contrary to our Inclinations.

4. But if we love it in our selves, we are far from using it so when we perceive it in others. It appears then to us, on the contrary under its natural form, and we hate it by so much more as we love our selves, because Self-love of other men opposes all the desires of ours. We would that all others should love us, admire us, buckle under us, and that they should be busied with the care of satisfying us. And they have not only no desire thereto, but they look upon us as ridiculous in pretending to it, and they are ready to do all, not only to hinder us from succeeding in our desires, but to make us obnoxious to theirs, and to require the same things of us. Behold then by this means all men at difference one with another; And if he

who hath said, that Men are born in a state and condition of War, and that each man is naturally an enemy to all other men, had a mind only to represent by these words the disposition of the Hearts of men, one towards another, without pretence of passing it for legitimate and just; he would have said a thing as conform to Truth and Experience, as that which is maintained is contrary to Reason and Justice.

5. It cannot possibly be imagined how there can be formed Societies, Commonwealths, and Kingdoms out of this multitude of People full of passions, so contrary to Union, and who only endeavour the ruin of one another. But Self-love which is the cause of this war, will easily tell the way how to make them live in peace. It loves Domination, it loves to enslave all the World to it, but it loves yet more life and convenientness, and an easie life more than Domination; and sees clearly that others are no ways disposed to suffer themselves to be domineered over, and are sooner ready to take away from it the Goods it loves best. Each man sees himself in an impossibility of succeeding by force in the designs which his Ambition suggests to him,

him, and apprehends likewise the loosing by that violence of others the essential Goods he possesseth. 'Tis that which obliges at first to submit ones self to the care of his own Preservation, and there is no other way found for that, but to unite ones self with others, to beat back by force those who undertake to deprive us both of our lives and fortunes. And to strengthen this Union, laws are made, and punishments ordered for those who violate them. Thus by the means of tortures, and gibbets set up in publick, the thoughts and tyrannical designs of every particular mans Self-love are withheld.

6. Fear of death is then the first tye of Civil society, and the first check of Self-love. 'Tis that which forceth Men, what aversion soever they may have to obey the Laws, and which makes them in such a manner forget these vast thoughts of Domination, that they hardly are raised any more in the thoughts of the most part of them, so impossible they see it is for them to prosper therein.

Thus seeing themselves excluded from the open violence, they are constrained to seek other ways, and to substitute

craft for force, and they find therein no other means than to endeavour to content the Self-love of those whom they have need of, instead of tyrannizing over them.

Some endeavour to make it fit for their Interests, others employ flattery to gain it. Gifts are bestowed to obtain it. This is the source and foundation of all Commerce practised amongst men, and which is varied a thousand ways. For they do not truck merchandises for merchandises or for money, but they mutually traffick, I mean they make a trade also of labours and toyls, of services done, of diligence and assiduity, of civility; and Men exchange all that either for things of the same nature, or for real goods, as when by vain complacencies we obtain Effective commodities.

'Tis thus that by the means and help of this Commerce, all necessities for this life are in some sort supplied without intermixing Charity with it. So that in Estates, where Charity hath no admittance, because true Religion is banished from thence, men do not cease to live with as much peace, safety and commodiousness, as if they were in a Republick of Saints.

7. 'Tis not that this tyrannical Inclination which makes us have a desire to rule and govern by force over others, is not always lively in the hearts of Men. But as they see themselves unable to prosper therein, they are forced to dissemble it, untill they are strengthened by gaining others by sweet ways, to have afterwards the means to bring others to their bent by force. Every one therefore is mindfull at first to occupy the first Rank of the Society he is of, and when he sees himself excluded, he thinks of those which follow. In a word, he extolls himself the most he can, and he humbles himself only by constraint. In every state, and in every condition he endeavors always to acquire to himself some Preheminence, Authority, Intendency, Consideration, Jurisdiction, and to dilate his power as much as he can. Princes wage war with their Neighbors, that they may enlarge the limits of their Estates. The Officers of several Companies in one and the same Country, undertake and intrude upon one another: They strive to supplant them, and to humble each other in all their Employments, and in all their Offices. And if the wars which are made there are not

so bloody as those which Princes make; 'Tis not because the passions are not as quick and sharp, but 'tis for the most part because they dread the punishment, which the Laws threaten to those who have recourse to violent ways.

8. I see nothing more proper to represent this Spiritual world formed by Concupiscence, then the Idea which some Philosophers give us of the material World made by Nature, that is to say, of that Assembly of Bodies which compose the Universe. Because we see there, that every part of Matter tends naturally to move and to dilate it self, and to issue out of its place, but being pressed by other Bodies it is confin'd too kind of prison, from whence it escapes so soon as it finds that it has more power and force than the matter wherewith it is environed. Behold already the Picture of Constraint, whereto the Self-love of each particular is reduced by that of others, which does not permit it to set it self out at large so much as it would. We are going to see all the motions in the sequel of this Comparison. For these little confin'd Bodies coming to muster up their forces, and their motions do form great heaps of matter
which

which Philosophers call Whirlwinds, which are as States and Kingdoms: And these Whirlwinds are themselves pressed and imprisoned by other Whirlwinds, as it were by neighbouring Kingdoms. They likewise will, that in each Whirlwind there are formed other small ones, which following the general motions of the great Bodies which draw them, have nevertheless a particular motion, which doth force yet other small Bodies to turn round about them; which represents the Grandees of State, who follow them in such a manner, that they have their particular Interests, and are as the Center of a quantity of People who fix themselves to their Fortune. Lastly, as these little Bodies drawn by the Whirlwinds, do yet turn as much as they can upon their own Center, so likewise the little ones which follow the fortune of the Grandees and that of the State, do not forbear with all their endeavours and all their services, which they render them, to look upon themselves, and to have always their own proper Interest in prospect.

9. That which self-love covets particularly in Sovereignty, is, that we be regarded and looked upon by others as
great

great and powerful, and that we stir up in their hearts motions of respect and submission, conform to these *Ideas*. But however it may be the Impressions which are most agreeable to it are not yet the only ones wherewith self-love doth nourish it self. It generally loves all those things which are favourable to it, as admiration, respect, constancy, and chiefly love. There are many who scarcely do what they ought, to make them beloved; but there are none who do not desire to be loved, and who do not behold with great pleasure this Propensity in others turned towards them, which is that which is called love. What if it appear that we labour not much to obtain this love? 'Tis because we had rather give sentiments of fear and submission under Greatness, or because, desiring too passionately to please certain persons, we trouble our selves very little to please others.

10. Yet this does not hinder but that even when we are carryed away by more strong Passions, we behave our selves after a fashion very improper to make us be beloved; yet would be beloved, and do not perceive our selves incommoded, when we see in the minds of others

others motions of hatred and aversion. There are likewise many people, in whom this inclination of making themselves be beloved is stronger than that of Domineering and Lording over men, and who fear more mens hatred and aversion, and the judgments which produceth it, then they love to be rich and powerful. Lastly whereas there are few great ones, and few likewise who are able to aspire to greatness, on the contrary there are none who cannot pretend to make himself be beloved.

II. If the desire of being loved is not then the strongest Passion which springs from self-love, at least it is the most general. The considerations of Interest, of Ambition, of Pleasure, stop many times the effects of it, but they do it not effectively. It is always active at the bottom of the Heart, and so soon as it is at liberty, it forbears not being active, and to make us desire all that is able to procure us the love of Men, as it makes us avoid all whatsoever we think may draw upon us their hatred. It is true, we are sometimes deceived in the distinction which we make of these things, which draw love or hatred, and that there are some who judge thereof

thereof much better, and more nicely than others. But be it that we are deceived therein, or that we be not, 'tis always the same Passion which acts, and which flies or seeks the same Objects. There is also a common distinction for all Men, even to a certain degree, that is to say, they know every one, even to some point, that certain actions excite hatred, and others cause love.

12. It is not needfull to dive further into the discription of the retreats of Self-love, to comprehend how it imitates very much Charity. It is sufficient to say that Self-love hindring us through fear of chastisement to violate the Laws, doth remove us by this means outwardly from all the Crimes, and so renders us like to those who avoid them through Charity. That as Charity comforts the necessities of others in the sight of God, who will that we acknowledge his Favours in helping our Neighbour. Likewise Self-love comforts them in the sight of their proper Interest. And that lastly, there is hardly any action where-to we are carried by Charity that would please God, wherunto Self-love cannot engage us to please Men.

13. But tho Self-love tend by these
three

three motions to counterfeit Charity, we must for all that allow that the last comes nearer to it, and that it is much more extended than the two others. For there are many occasions, where neither fear nor interest have any place. And we distinguish often easily enough what we do, either through Human fear or through absolute Interest, from what we do by a motive of Charity. But it is not the same of Love, and esteem for Men. This inclination is so nice, and subtle, and at the same time of such a latitude, that there is nothing it cannot enter into; and it knows so well how to trim it self up with the appearances of Charity, that it is almost impossible to know exquisitely what distinguishes it from Charity. Because marching in the same steps, and producing the same effects, it defaces with a marvellous subtilty all the signs, and characters of Self-love from whence it springs, because it sees very well that it could obtain nothing of what it pretends, if they were taken notice of. The reason of it is, because nothing doth draw upon us so much the thing called Aversion, as Self-love, and because it cannot shew it self without exciting it. We experience
this

this our selves in regard of the Self-love of others. We are not able to suffer it so soon as we discover it, and it is easie for us to judge by that, that they are not more favourable to ours when they discover it.

'Tis this which inclines those who are sensible of the hatred of men, and who love not to expose themselves thereunto to endeavour to withdraw as much as in them lies, their Self-love from the sight of others, to disguise and counterfeit it, never to shew it under its natural shape, to imitate the behaviour of those who would be intirely exempt from it, that is to say, persons animated with the spirit of Charity, and who would not act but through Charity.

14. This suppression of Self-love, is properly that which makes human Civility, and shews in what it consisteth. And 'tis this which hath caused a learned Man of this Age, to say that Christian virtue destroys & annihilates Self-love, and that human Civility hides and suppresses it.

Thus this Civility which hath been the Idol of the learned Pagans, is nothing at the bottom, but a Self-love more intelligent, and exact than that of the generality of the World, which
knows

knows how to shun what hurts its designs, and which tends to its mark, which is the esteem and love of Men by a more straight and reasonable way, in shewing how Self-love doth imitate the principal actions of Charity.

15. 'Tis no hard matter to comprehend in what manner Charity renders us humble. For making us love Justice, which is God himself, it makes us hate injustice, which is contrary to him. Now 'tis an injustice very visible, that being as we are full of faults, and guilty of so many sins, we would be honoured of Men, and that we should pretend to deserve their Praises either by Human qualities, and so consequently vain and frivolous, or by gifts, which we have received of God, and which do not belong unto us. It is not just that a sinner be honoured, but it is just that he be humbled and brought low. 'Tis the eternal Law which ordains it, & Charity consents to this law. Charity loves it, and by the love which it bears to it, embraces with joy all humiliations and humblings. Charity makes us hate all that smells of pride and vanity; and as it condemns these motions when they start up in our hearts, it hinders them also from appearing without by words
and

and actions, which it reduces thus to an exact modesty.

16. Yet there is nothing in this, but what Self-love imitates perfectly ; For seeing the Heart of each man turned absolutely towards it self, and naturally an enemy to the preferring any other : It dares not expose it self to their thought and malignity.

Whoever praises himself, and sets to sale what he thinks he hath that's good, pretends thereby to bring others to him, and 'tis almost the same thing, as if he beg'd of them to give him praises, and to look upon him with esteem and love. Now there is hardly any prayer which appears more uncivil, and more incommodious to Self-love, which men bear themselves, than this. It is angry and vexed at it, and answers only by scoffing and disdain. Thus those who are cunning enough to know these tricks and devices, avoid making these kind of demands, that is to say, they keep themselves generally to a distance from all that seems vanity, from all that tends to make them be taken notice of, and to shew these advantages ; and they endeavour on the contrary to appear not to heed them, nor to know them in themselves,

selves. And that is the modesty Civility is able to procure.

17. Civility doth not only flie these means and base vain glories, and the declared Commendations which Man gives himself; but knowing that Self-love of others is extreamly subtile in discovering the by-ways which may be taken to make manifest in us what we desire to shew thereby: Civility renounces these small Crafts, and studies to avoid them. It would force us rather to speak of our selves directly and publickly, then to make use of these wicked Trucks, because Civility always fears being surpris'd therein, and knows that when men perceive them, they take a great delight to turn and make them ridiculous. Thus you see there is nothing more simple and humble then these Discourses. Civility does not Publish nor shew it self by any way, and in a word, it hath for a general rule, never to speak of it self, or if it do, 'tis with more coldness and indifferency then of others.

18. Those who have heard speak of the War maintain'd by the two chief Captains of this Age, have always been ravish'd with the Civility and Modesty of their Discourse. No man hath ever
observed

observed, that the least word on this Subject that could be suspected of vanity hath been spoken by them. They have always been seen to do Justice to all others, but never to themselves, and one would have believed, to have heard them make a relation of some Battels wherein they have had the greatest share, both by their Conduct and Valour that even they were not there, or if they were, that it was without acting any thing. Let men read that News which came to *Paris* after the Battel of *Senof*, they will find therein that great Action half deminished. It seems that the Prince of *Conde* was but as Spectator therein. He was every where, and it appears he was hardly in any part; and never was any thing more lessen'd then what he contributed to the success of this great Combate. I think that if *St. Lewis* sent formerly relations of what he acted in *Egypt*, they were described like this. So much resemblance have Holiness and Civility in their outward deeds and tend equally to hinder that nothing that's vain may appear therein, there being only this one difference between the one and the other, that holiness is struck with the injustice of Vanity.

nity in relation to God, and Civility is concerned for its meanness in relation to men.

19. Moreover the fear which Civility hath of exciting against it self the natural aversion all men have for the vanity of another may yet have in this Conduct a more cunning and delicate sentiment of this Pride, which is born with man, and which never abandons him. These people which we see so busied with some affairs wherein they have signalized themselves that they have astonished all the World, as *Cicero* did by his Consul-ship make appear thereby that Virtue is not at all natural to them, and that they had need of great strength to hoist up their Souls to the condition wherein they are so glad to shew themselves. But there is more Grandeur not to make reflection upon their great Actions, so that they seem to escape us, and that they Spring so naturally from the Disposition of the Soul that she is not aware of them. This degree of Virtue is doubtless much more Heroick, and it is of this which human Civility, when it is at its height, endeavours, without thinking of it expressly, to give the *Idea*; or which it imitates

tates by Cunning and Policy, when it is not perfect, and proceeds rather from Reason then from Nature.

20. Who could chuse but love that well-bred man, of whom a great Wit of this Age hath made this description. *Man does not pass in the World, said he, for being known in Verse, unless he hang out the Sign of a Poet, nor for an Able man in Mathematicks, without that of a Mathematician. But the true Well-bred men will have no Signs, and hardly put any difference betwixt the Profession of a Poet and that of an Ambassador. They are called neither Poets nor Geomitricians, but they Judge of all those. Man does not conjecture it; they will speak of things which men spoke of when they entred; there is not perceived in them one quality more then another, barring a necessity of putting it in use, but then they are mindful of it. Because it equally belongs to this Character, that we say not of them that they speak well when there is no question of the Language, and that we say of them, That they speak well when there is a question of it. 'Tis therefore a false commendation, when one saith of a man when he comes in, That he is skilful in Poetry, and 'tis an ill Sign when men have recourse to him, only because he is able to*
judge

judge of some Verses. Man is full of business; he loves only those who are able to employ him in it. He is a good Mathematician, one will say, but I have nothing to do with Mathematicks. He is a man who understands War well, but I will not wage War with any one. We must therefore have a man who can adapt himself to all our Affairs.

It is impossible not to love a man thus qualified. But why do we love him? 'Tis because he seems to be made for others, and not for himself. He troubles not our Self-love by an importunate affectation, he pretends not to force us to praise him in making appear in him what we would not see. If he shews us what is good in him, 'tis for us that he shews it. Civility rendring us therefore sensible of these favourable Judgments and Opinions which it discovers in the minds of others, by this proceeding forces it self to deserve them in following it.

21. We may discover by this, wherefore the same actions may be civil in some Men, and not so in others. This happens for that they are less affected in some, and because Self-love shews it self less, and testifies less desire to apply
men

men to it. Let a man, such an one as Mr. *Vangelas*, whose profession is to study Languages, make a Book wherein he observes, both the good, and bad fashions of speaking those which are in use at Court, and those which smell of the Country, no man can find fault therein: 'Tis a man who makes it his Trade, and he may have had in that a laudable Consideration to render this Service to the publick. But if it should fall out, for example, that a Priest, or a Religious Man being angry at fine wit, would make Collections of some words which were said in the streets, and in places which he ought not to know, that he would appear full of esteem for Gallantry, and for the Conversation of Ladies, it could by no means be suffered. All the world would become Spiritual at his cost, and whether through malice, or through an opinion of Religion, would make a thousand reflections upon the disproportion of some thoughts, wherein he might busie himself, from the Holiness of his Office and his Profession. Insomuch that when men take delight in his Book, either because there would be something that's good therein, or because there would be some body who might be

beill dealt withall, which is always agreeable, they esteem the person of the Author less, and find themselves disposed to choose him either for Friend or Counsellor.

22. It is needles to prove that Charity is yet more removed from affectation, than meer Civility. For loving others but not it self, it hath nothing to do but to follow its natural motions, to act with a perfect Civility. It does it so much better, by how much it does it more sincerely, and that there is nothing of counterfeit in it. Whereas this civility of Self-love is for the most part not so uniform. If civility repress it in one part, Self-love shews it self sometimes in another, and so leaves some little disgust of it self, to those who observe it narrowly. But as that happens but against its intention, it is ashamed being aware of it, or rather perceiving that others did observe it.

Thus it is always true to say, that when Self-love follows reason exactly in the search of esteem, and affection of Men, it imitates perfectly Charity, so that in consulting it upon exterior actions it makes us the same answer that Charity does, and engages us in the same ways.

23. If for example, one ask Charity, in what disposition we ought to be concerning the subject of our Faults, she will tell us that we ought extreamly to contemn our selves as to our own understanding, in regard of those we think we have not ; and that the perswasion wherein we ought to be in general of our blindness in this Point, ought to dispose us more to believe others in this than our selves ; But in respect of faults which we shall be convinced of, there would be nothing more unjust than to counterfeit, and destroy in some sort the Light of God it self, by pretending to justify what it condemns, and thus the least we can do to escape this pride so criminal, is to acknowledge them sincerely, and to humble our selves before God and Man.

24. Let us now propose the same question to Self-love, and we shall see if it speak not the same language at the bottom of the Heart, it gives yet the same counsel. Tho it be hard, it will say, to acknowledge our faults, and desire to deface them, and blot them out of the memory of Man, as well as out of our own, it is evident nevertheless that that is impossible. The more we shall strive to disguise them from others,

thers, the more ingenuous they will be to discover them, and wicked to make them taken notice of. This same desire of Concealing them will pass in their minds for the greatest of faults, and we shall do nothing in striving either to dissemble them or to maintain them, but draw hatred and disdain upon our selves. We must therefore necessarily steer another course. If we cannot have the glory of being without faults, we must have that of knowing them, and not being cheats to our selves. *Bellum est sua vitia nosse*, Let us take away then from others the pleasure of taking notice of them, in observing them our selves first, and thereby disarming their wickedness.

'Tis upon the like considerations that Civility forms its conduct, and 'tis that which carries it to make an open profession of acknowledging sincerely all its Faults, and not to take it ill that others observe them, and by this means it gains the reputation of an amiable equity, which makes it judge of it self clearly, and without passion, which knows how to justify it self, and with which one may be at quiet, without being obliged outwardly to testify that one approves, what indeed one approves not.

25. It is easie to be discerned by what has been said, that Charity and Self-love should be very conform as to the receiving reprehensions and advertisements, and that some very different consideration, and motives ought to unite them in the same outward conduct. We know well enough that to which Charity sways us; For looking upon these Advertisements, as a very great good, and a favourable means to deliver us from our Faults, Charity receives them not only with joy, but with greediness and avidity. The bitterness it self which accompanies them is agreeable to it, as procuring us the satisfaction of humility, and weakening Self-love, which Charity esteems as its worst enemy. Thus 'tis so far from shewing any disgust or sharpness of speech to those who procure us this good, that it forgets nothing that may testify its gratefulness; to comfort them in the fear they have of hurting us, to incline them, to do us sometimes the same favour, and to free them from all doubts which may make them reserved, and keep them in torment and constraint.

26. In truth Self-love is always invariably very far removed from this disposition.

on. It loves not that others take notice of our Faults, and much less that they admonish us of them. But yet it acts outwardly as Charity does. For learning by these admonitions which are given us, the bad impression Men have of us, reason makes Self-love conclude presently, that it must be lessen'd, or at least not augmented; and consulting afterwards other mens minds to learn how we ought to guide ours, Self-love easily acknowledgeth that nothing is a greater stumbling-block than the haughtiness of those, who are not able to endure to be admonish'd of any of their Faults, who rebell against Truth, and who could wish that all the World were blind in respect of them, or would suppress their thoughts, so soon as they are not for their advantage; and on the contrary nothing is more agreeable to People than to be freed from this resistance, and to see that they put a stop to their judgments, and to their light, and thus in some sort they submit themselves to their empire. Self-love therefore without hesitating takes this last part, and thereby makes us insinuate our selves so agreeably into the hearts of those who reprove us, that they love

those who humble themselves in that manner much better, what faults soever they have, than those who having none, have not opportunity to give them this satisfaction. Because we must observe that our faults are not of themselves contrary to the Self-love of others, and likewise that the bravest qualities of themselves, are not pleasing to it. 'Tis the relation these faults, and these brave qualities have with them. So that if these faults make us more humble in respect of them, or if these brave qualities render us more haughty, they will love us with these faults, and hate us with all those brave qualities.

27. It is manifest that this conduct aims directly at least at Self-love, which is to obtain the esteem of the friendship of men. And therefore Human civility never fails to follow it, and often even does it more exactly than true Piety, when it is not perfect. Because as Charity is less active than Self-love, it happens often also that Pious people appear more sensible, and more delicate than civil wordly Men, when advertised of their faults, which are observed in their Conduct, or in their labours, because in these occurrences, not having

a very lively Charity, they lack also this Self-love which is a supplement in regard of outward actions.

28. The conduct which Charity observes towards civil Men, when we are prepossessed with unjust suspicions, and unreasonable Impressions of them, is not to reprove them, and shew discontent and malice, but to justify them in testifying that they are not astonished that being Men, they are suspected of human frailties, and in a word not to complain of these suspicions, but to labour to cure them; because we ought to look upon them as very dangerous for those who have them, and that the way to free them from them, is not to reprove them when they are not persuaded that they are in the wrong, but to shew them gently the falsity of their suspicions to oblige them, by this means to condemn them their own selves.

29. In truth if we follow on these occasions, the first motives of Self-love, we shall be very far from this moderation. They will be on the contrary only passions full of resentments and bitterness. But if we consult Reason, with a resolution to follow it to arrive at last

at last at what we ought, which is to blot out these suspicions, which are so injurious, and to stablish our reputation in the minds of those who have received them, it is necessary that we take the same way. Because all that seems passion and trouble of the mind, is only capable to increase the bad Impressions men have harboured of us. And whereas oftentimes there is only the mind which is prepossessed therewith, we by bitterness carry it into the will it self, and make it endeavour to maintain the Impressions of the mind. Thus Self-love foreseeing this evil effect, is reduced, how unwilling soever it may be, to imitate this sweet and moderate conduct which Charity prescribes.

30. Who would ever believe that Self-love, even when it should have intention to cry down its enemies, to render them odious, and to make them condemn'd by all the world of baseness, and injustice, could not do better to prosper therein, then to follow the steps of Charity? Yet this happens very often. For there is nothing for the most part, which makes base and uncivil proceedings which are used towards us, appear better, than to withstand those by a process

cess full of civility and moderation. This opposition, which shews the difference of these two contrary conducts, makes the one and the other more apparent. Civility appears more lovely on the one side, and baseness more shamefull on the other. And in this manner Self-love hath all it pretends, which is, that we raise our selves, and humble those who have offended us.

31. I remember upon this Subject, that when a certain Book was published, in which the Author pretended to have gathered together divers and sundry faults against the Language, which he thought he had found in some works of Piety, which passed for well written, it was examined in a Society by a way of discourse, what those who were concerned therein ought to do on this score; Each man agreed presently that the remarks of this Author being inconsiderable, ought not to be proposed against the same Writings, because there was no other end in it, but that of acquiring the reputation of Writing well; those whom it attacked, ought not to have the least thought of forming a contest upon so frivolous an occasion; how much to blame soever this Author might be in

some of his Remarks. But when we came to speak of what they ought to do, we were not of the same mind. There were some who would maintain, that they ought not to affirm that they had seen this Book. But the Generality believed that they ought to take other measures, and that for full answer, they need only correct honestly and faithfully in the other Editions of those Books, all that this Author had disallowed therein with any gloss of Justice. The reason which they alledge for it besides the general motive of honouring Truth in every thing, is, that there was no better way, whereby the Publick can do this Author, and those whom it should have attacked, Justice, than by using them so moderately. I confess that I was of this opinion, and that I thought there was none more conform, neither to Charity, which always tends to humble us, nor to Self-love, which is glad to place in sight the faults of those who have a desire to abase us. I will also praise it very willingly, if I have occasion to do it, without any pretence whatsoever of obliging any one to believe that it is an act of humility, being I acknowledge that it may very easily have another principle.

32. 'Tis thus that Charity and Civility accord together to make appear outwardly the same Sentiment, in what regards our good and bad qualities; and it is not hard to judge thereby that they do the same in what regards others. We see easily whereto Charity inclines, in respect of the good it observes in others. As Charity rejoyces at it inwardly, it testifies also its joy outwardly all manner of ways possible, and far from endeavouring to observe it, Charity useth its power to heighten it and make it esteemed. Other mens good is its proper good, through the love it bears them, and it stops there more cheerfully, than at its own, because it fears not therein complacency and vanity.

33. It would seem at first that there could be no reason to hope the like conduct from Self-love. For it is so far from having this goodness and kindness for others, that on the contrary it is naturally wicked, jealous, envious, full of gall and venom. All that puffs up others Incommodes, and vexes it, and one hardly sees it really favourable to the praises given them, except some profit may be drawn from thence, and that they make use of it as a step to raise themselves.

But

But although one perceive in himself all these motives, nevertheless when one considers the effect they would make upon the minds of others, if one should shew them publickly, one would immediately conclude to keep them secret. We see clearly that that would be the way to make ones self lookt upon as a common and publick Enemy, and would thereby become the Object of hatred, and the abomination of all the World. We should not only be odious to those against whom we would exercise our wickedness, but even to those we would spare, no body being able to assure himself to receive Justice from people in whom this evil Platform is found, and every one fearing, with reason, to become the object of their Jealousie. Civility makes us therefore take justly the contrary way. It makes us affect to shew outwardly an extream equity to praise voluntarily what is Praise-worthy, to set a value as great as we can on others mens good qualities, and not to refuse even to our Enemies our Testimonies of esteem which they deserve; and by this means we prosper in the Design of making our selves beloved, we acquire friends, we pacifie our Enemies, and we keep

keep a good Correspondence with all the World.

34. 'Tis by these considerations that Civility doth manifest an extream Indulgence for other mens faults, and far from exaggerating or divulging them, doth hide and excuse them as much as it can; never contemns any man, explicates all to the best, is easily satisfied, and affects not to be curious and subtil in discovering peoples faults who are generally esteem'd, avoids rash and ill-grounded suspicions, and had rather, in some sort, be deceived, then give way to suspicions which are hurtful to its Neighbour. All this tends directly, at least to self-love. For as we cannot be ignorant but that we have faults, we hate much more those whom we judge will Scorn us when they shall perceive them, and we cannot on the contrary but love those from whom we hope for some support, condescendence and favour.

35. If Charity be patient in Injuries, because it endeavours to assuage the sharpness of those who hurt us, it does it that we may suffer all sorts of bad usage joyfully, to satisfy Gods Justice, and perswades us that we deserve yet worse. Self-love hath also a Patience of Interest

est and Vanity which outwardly produceth the same effects. It hinders us for passing for proud and presumptuous. It teaches us, That 'tis good not to vex or provoke people too much, and thereupon makes us dissemble the Injuries which we receive.

If Charity be kind through a sincere desire of serving others, Self-love will also that we be so, to rule thereby in their minds, and to enjoy the inclinations which these good Turns excite therein.

If Charity endeavour to conceal it self when it does good to others, that it may not attribute any thing to it self, Self-love does as much to enjoy it more fully, because we hold our selves so much more obliged, by how much more he who does a good turn does it privately.

If Charity extend its good turns to those from whom nothing is expected, and even to Enemies, as regarding nothing but their good, and not its own interest: Self-love does the same, as knowing by how much more good turns do appear disinterested and free from all self-seeking, by so much more they obtain a general affection by a hope they give

give to all the world of receiving the like.

If Charity be thankful towards the world, because its Gratitude towards God diffuseth it self over all the instruments which it makes use of to procure us happiness: Self-love makes us earnestly desire to be so, for fear of disturbing the happiness of others who expect it, and is troubled when it fails therein.

Lastly, if Charity makes us faithful towards all the World through a sincere love of Justice, Self-love makes us practice the same Fidelity to obtain mens assurance.

36. Charity, as the Apostle saith, is not ambitious, because those who are so, have but little esteem for human Honors and temporal Greatness which Ambition seeks; because they fear them more than they desire them, and find themselves alway happy in the condition wherein God hath placed them. We cannot say so much of human Civility, and if we will judge of it by its *Basis* or Ground-work, this Civility is not only subject to Ambition, but is indeed nothing else but a curious and delicate Ambition, and yet endeavours outwardly to imitate Charity. For it knows so well
how

how to conceal its ambitious desires, for fear of meeting with opposition in the self-love of others, which is always on its Guard on that side, that one would say, it had not any pretence, that it had only a care for others, and that it had absolutely forgot it self. If it think of raising it self, 'tis without trouble and meanness, and it does it so well as if Fortune seemed always to come and find it it self, without being able to make any retreat or any advance to obtain it.

37. There are some likewise which self-love pushes further, and to whom it gives an effective separation from great Fortunes and great Employes, tho possibly they might arrive thereunto. The satisfaction of a sweet and quiet life, in which we entertain a great quantity of brave Friendships, and render service to many persons of quality and worth without Interest or Dependence in contenting our selves to have got in the world the reputation of a Civil, Obliging, Disinterested Man, and a good Friend. This life, I say, hath Charms which are able to make it preferred before all the greatness in the World, through a wise and discreet Self-love, and which knows how to compare the
advan-

advantages and disadvantages of divers States. This is the *Idea* which *Pomponius Atticus* proposed to himself, and which he followed so happily that being found amongst many dissenting Parties, who in his time tore in peices the Republick of *Rome*, he was always friend to all, and served them without displeasing any. We see yet that there are of *Atticus's* followers or imitators, and it may be said to their advantage, that if it were permitted or possible to be happy in this life, they would have found out the secret of it, and that their choice is infinitely wiser then that of others, who being always desirous to raise themselves by a boundless ambition, do thereby deprive themselves of two principal goods of life, which are Security and Repose.

38. Likewise it is easie to see, that as Charity seperates us from the pleasures of the senses, because it keeps the Soul in order, and permits it to cleave to God only; Civility ought to do the same, because the subjection to Corporal pleasures hath always something of mean and contemptible, which debases and disfigures the *Idea* of us, which self-love desires to imprint in the minds of others.

others. We have also reason to be distrustful of those who are governed by their Passions and Pleasures, and to fear from them all sort of basenesses and injuries. For what assurance can one have that their Passion will not oversway them when it shall be contrary to their duty towards men, being we see it sways them so often in what is their Duty to God.

Thus Civility, which will above all conserve the reputation of an inviolable Fidelity, and of an inflexible firmness in duties, affects to appear free from this Passion for Pleasures, which gives so just an occasion of distrust.

39. Lastly, not to urge this conformity of Charity and Self-love to a troublesome rehearsal, I shall content my self to add what I have said of it, that it is very true that Self-love may imitate all the Actions of Charity, and insinuate it self often into those wherein it seems it may have the least share, and which are design'd to mortifie and to destroy it.

It can sometimes make religious persons Fast, or at least assuage one part of the trouble of their Fast. The hair Cloaths and Discipline are sometimes for their use, and there is hardly any humili-

humiliation which Self-love is not capable to practice ; and although it find not its accompt in solitude, in silence, and in secret Austerities, there are perchance certain hidden passages and certain subterraneous ways, through which it might (may be) find some entrance. In fine self-love is also capable to make us suffer even death with joy ; and to the end that there may be no certain way to distinguish it from Charity by Martyrdoms, the Saints do teach us after *St. Paul*, that there are Martyrs of Vanity as well as of Charity. Therefore *St. Austin* having said, *That Vanity doth imitate so exactly the works of Charity, that there is almost no difference at all betwixt their effects, that Charity doth nourish the Poor, and that Vanity doth so likewise; that Charity Fasteth, that Vanity can Fast also; that these works do strike us, but that we cannot distinguish which come from a good and which from an ill Principle.* He adds at last that Charity dyes, and brings us at the end to Martyrdom, and that Vanity dyes also and suffereth Martyrdom. *Videte qualia opera faciat Superbia, quam similia faciat & prope paria Charitati. Pascit Esurientem Charitas, Pascit & Superbia, Charitas ut Deus laudetur, Superbia ut ipsa laudetur.* Je-

junit Charitas, jejunit & Superbia. Opera videmus, in operibus non discernimus. Moritur Charitas, Moritur Superbia.

40. But there is this difference betwixt the hard, troublesome and humbling actions of Vertue, and those which have nothing but what is beautifull without being troublesom, that when Self-love perswades Men to humility, patience, and to suffering, 'tis by a kind of unsualness or disorder. For it is evident, for example, that the way to attain to our end, which we propose, is not to shut our selves up in solitude to have no converse with Men, or to have nothing spoken of but our sins and faults. And thus it is almost impossible that there be any who embrace this kind of life so contrary to the inclinations of Nature, and who persevere therein by other motives, than those of Salvation. But it is not the same with the most part of the actions of Vertue, which may be done in the world. Self-love obtains its ends better by practising them. It cannot omit them without loosing what it aims at : And it must be carried away by some unreasonable passion against its true Interests, to follow any other road but this.

41. Thus one may say truly, that absolutely to reform the World, that's to say to banish all the Vices, and all the gross disorders therein, and to make Mankind happy even in this life, there needs only instead of Charity, to give every one a harmless Self-love, which may be able to discern its true Interests, and to incline thereto by the ways which true Reason shall discover to it. How corrupt soever this whole Society may be within, and in the sight of God, there would be nothing without better ordered, more civilly, more just, more peaceable, more honest, more generous; and what would be more admirable, 'tis that not being animated and stir'd but by Self-love, Self-love would not appear at all there, and being absolutely void of Charity, we should see every where nothing but the form and characters of Charity.

42. Perhaps it would not be amiss, that those who are charged with the Education of great Persons, should have this engraven in their minds, to the end that if they should not be able to inspire them with these sentiments of Charity, which they would gladly do, they should endeavour at least to form their
Self-

Self-love, and teach them how the most part of the ways which they take to content this Self-love are fallie, ill understood, and contrary to their true Interests, and how it would be facile for them to take some others, which would conduct them without trouble to honour and glory, and would get them the affection, the esteem, and the admiration of all the World. If they should not prosper by this means to render them usefull to themselves, they would at least make them usefull for others, and would put them in a way which would always be less remote from the way to Heaven, than that which they take, seeing that it would be only to change the end, and the intention, to render themselves as agreeable to God by a truly Christian vertue; as they would be to Man by the splendor of this human Civility to which we would form them.

43. But it would be of little or no moment that these two Principles so different, the one whereof bears the fruits of Life, the other of Death, should be confounded in the outward Actions, at least if it were easie for every one to know distinctly that which makes
him

him do it, to the end that he may be able to judge thereby of his actions and condition. What is more strange, is, that many times this mixture and this confusion begins in the heart it self, so that we cannot distinguish whether 'tis through Charity or Self-love that we act, whether 'tis God or our selves we seek for, whether 'tis for Heaven or Hell we labour. This obscurity proceeds from divers causes; and I will take notice here of the three principall ones.

44. The first is that these considerations of the judgments of men, and the motions of their hearts in regard of us which are the rule, the source, and the object of human Civility, are not always accompanied with formal and expresse reflections, and that the motions which they produce are yet more imperceptible to us. These are often in respect of the mind, only as certain looks, and certain transitory thoughts by which it is carried, as by stealth towards these Judgments, which are made of us, and in respect of the heart only as certain hidden Propensities, which stop it gently on this side; so that we do not make any expresse reflection

fection neither on this propensity, nor on the thoughts which produceth it, although that may be the thing which gives the motion to our outward Actions, and which is the Principle thereof.

45. The second is that it may often happen, that even when we are not removed in effect but through fear of displeasing men, or through a desire to please them. We have not absolutely any knowledge, nor any distinct thoughts, neither of the one nor the other; and that because we act often without a distinct knowledge, and by a simple custom, which is not guided, unless by confused thoughts, being forced to look upon certain actions, as able to bring upon us publick infamy, and the hatred of honest men, it forms it self in the mind a confused Idea thereof, which represents them to us as hatefull and odious, without troubling the mind why. And this Idea sufficeth to stir up in the heart a motion of horror, aversion and separation. Now the confused Idea's, and these motions which follow them, come so near to the true considerations of Charity, which make it hate the evil actions which they include, that there

is hardly any but God who can discern the difference betwixt them.

46. The third is, that even when we have Charity in the heart, and that it carries us to objects which are proper for it, nevertheless because cupidity marcheth many times the same ways, and tends to the same objects, tho by different motives, it makes a Hotch-potch in the Mind, and in the heart of these two considerations and motions, without our knowing certainly which it is that carries it, and which is the true principle of our Actions. We seek God and the World at once; the heart is very glad to please the one and the other, and knows, not whether 'tis God he relates to the World, or the World to God. This difference cannot be discovered, but by penetrating a certain Groundplot which is in the heart, and which is not evidently known but by God alone.

47. Behold what is the ordinary condition of Men in this life, even when they love God. Self-love acts more grossly in some than others, but it lives and acts in all to such a degree, and it is seldom that they are able to assure themselves of any one action in particular,

lar, that it is exempt from all self-inquiring. But tho this state and condition may be for them a great cause of grief and fear, they may be able nevertheless to find therein some Consolation, if they dive into the reasons for which God permits them to remain there, and raises not them to a higher degree of Vertue.

48. It is visible in the first place that the design which God hath to conceal the Kingdom of Heaven, which he came to establish upon Earth, requires that men of Honesty and uprightness be intermixt outwardly with wicked men, and that they be not distinguished from them by clear and visible marks. For if the faithfull, whom he animates by his Spirit, and in whom he resides as in his Temple, were a certain kind of men, separated from others, and as a Nation apart which the World might distinguish by actions which could not be met with in others, they would all be publick, continual and subsisting miracles, which would destroy the state of Faith, by which God will save the World. The wicked who would see themselves in an impossibility of imitating them, would thereby clearly know, that Nature can-

not

not attain to the state of vertuous Men. Therefore there must be some actions purely Human, which do so much resemble supernatural and divine Actions, that the distinction cannot be perceived. And as these well-meaning men do not commit any crimes, and thus cannot be thereby intermixed together with the wicked; It must necessarily follow, that the wicked can imitate their vertuous Actions, and do some which may be so like outwardly, that they cannot be discovered from the others.

49. But it is not only an effect of Gods Justice to withdraw from the sight of wicked men the treasures of Grace, which he gives to the Just. This is one of his Mercies also towards the Just themselves. It is good for them not to know themselves, nor to see their own proper Justice. The sight would be capable to overwhelm them. Man is so weak and feeble even in his force, that he is not able to undergo the weight of it. And by a strange disorder which hath its source in the corruption of the Heart, altho its happiness consists in the possession of Vertue, and its misfortune in being full of faults, it is there-

fore more dangerous for him to know his vertues than his faults. The knowledge of humility renders him proud, and that of his pride humble. He is strong and powerfull when he knows himself weak, and weak when he thinks he is strong. Thus this obscurity which impedes and hinders him from distinguishing clearly whether he acts by Charity, or by Self-love, is so far from hurting, that 'tis comfortable to him. This obscurity does not take away Vertues from him, but hinders him from loosing them, by keeping him always in humility and fear, and making him mistrust all his Works, and to rely only on Gods Mercy.

50. This is the great profit of this outward resemblance of the actions of Self-love, with those of Charity. But we may yet take notice of some others which are very material. It happens oftentimes that Charity is weak in certain Souls, and in this condition of weakness Charity would be easily extirpated by these violent tentations, if God did not permit that these tentations were not enervated, and as it were counterpoised by certain human motives, which stop the violence of it, and give
means

means to the Soul to follow the instinct of Grace. The fear of mens judgments is one of these motives, and there is hardly any of them which make more impression upon the Mind. Fear alone is not sufficient for Charity to surmount temptations in a Christian way, seeing that this fear springs only from vanity, but it suspends their force, and if it be found that the Soul hath some spark of true Charity, it puts her in a condition of following it ; and therefore we see that the Holy Legislators of Religious Orders have not been negligent in these human means, and that they have fixed to certain faults, penances, which were dreadfull before men, to the end that the fear of this Human confusion may render the Religious more diligent in avoiding them. 'Tis not that they would pretend to make them do them by this sole motive, but their intention hath been, that they should make use thereof to fortifie themselves against negligence, and that this Human fear might serve as arms to Charity, the better by this means to resist the inclination of Nature.

51. It is not then unprofitable for Men in the state of weakness, wherein

they are to be far removed from vices, not only by Charity, but also by this kind of Self-love which is called Civility, to the end that in the feebleness of charity Civility may be able to uphold the Mind, and hinder it from falling into dangerous excesses. And 'tis this which makes us see often strange Revolutions in those, who being little sensible of mens judgments, and not thinking of pleasing or displeasing them are sometimes touched with some small motions of Piety. Because when it happens that they want these motions, not having then curb enough to stop them, they let themselves be hurried away to all sorts of Extravagancies. Thus when one relies upon Men, it is good to consider if besides Conscience which keeps them from evil, they have yet a certain Civility, which makes them apprehend doing things which may be condemned by wise and prudent Persons, there being hardly any spirits more dangerous, than those who are capable of maintaining an unreasonable and extravagant conduct against the Publick Judgment, and of placing themselves without reason above the reproach of those who know them.

52. Is it not a great and considerable advantage to Civil men to be able to conceal themselves from men by the means of this obscurity which hinders one from discerning true Piety, from Self-love, and which makes actions of Charity pass in the mind of the World for the effects of pure Civility? For how dangerous would it be for them, if all their good actions were taken notice of, and that they were recompenced for them out of hand by praises which they would bring them? It would be the means to oblige them to separate themselves entirely from the society of Men; whereas by the favour of this confusion they have some more liberty to treat with the World, to follow on all occasions the motions of their Charity, in hopes that they will be taken only as simple and meer Civilities. In a word one may say, that as Civility is very glad to pass for Charity, and that it doth all it can to borrow its form and shape, and its characters; Charity on the contrary is glad that it may be taken for Civility, and altho it does not contribute directly to establish this Impression, yet it does nothing to destroy it, as well because it knows not abso-

I 4

lutely

they are to be far removed from vices, not only by Charity, but also by this kind of Self-love which is called Civility, to the end that in the feebleness of charity Civility may be able to uphold the Mind, and hinder it from falling into dangerous excesses. And 'tis this which makes us see often strange Revolutions in those, who being little sensible of mens judgments, and not thinking of pleasing or displeasing them are sometimes touched with some small motions of Piety. Because when it happens that they want these motions, not having then curb enough to stop them, they let themselves be hurried away to all sorts of Extravagancies. Thus when one relies upon Men, it is good to consider if besides Conscience which keeps them from evil, they have yet a certain Civility, which makes them apprehend doing things which may be condemned by wise and prudent Persons, there being hardly any spirits more dangerous, than those who are capable of maintaining an unreasonable and extravagant conduct against the Publick Judgment, and of placing themselves without reason above the reproach of those who know them.

52. Is it not a great and considerable advantage to Civil men to be able to conceal themselves from men by the means of this obscurity which hinders one from discerning true Piety, from Self-love, and which makes actions of Charity pass in the mind of the World for the effects of pure Civility? For how dangerous would it be for them, if all their good actions were taken notice of, and that they were recompenced for them out of hand by praises which they would bring them? It would be the means to oblige them to seperate themselves entirely from the society of Men; whereas by the favour of this confusion they have some more liberty to treat with the World, to follow on all occasions the motions of their Charity, in hopes that they will be taken only as simple and meer Civilities. In a word one may say, that as Civility is very glad to pass for Charity, and that it doth all it can to borrow its form and shape, and its characters; Charity on the contrary is glad that it may be taken for Civility, and altho it does not contribute directly to establish this Impression, yet it does nothing to destroy it, as well because it knows not abso-

lutely that it is not something of it, as because that it is advantageous to Self-love that we believe it.

53. Lastly, is not this a motive powerful enough to stir us up to the practice of Virtues, to say to ones self, I *should be very unfortunate to wander and stray out of the way whereto Charity and Self-interest equally inclines me, and to render myself, in forsaking them, equally odious to God and man.* Is not this a means to praise God, that he hath been pleased to forbid us the most part of Disorders, as contrary to the good of men even in this life, and ought to be avoided for the same motive of human interest? In fine is not this a means to understand better the strange corruption of nature and the violence of our passions, to see that they make us forget not only what we owe to God, but also what we owe to our selves, and render us unfortunate both in this World and in the other? Because if there be less glory and merit in serving God, when it is for our Interest, there is, without doubt, more disorder and confusion not to serve him, when we deprive our selves at the same time of what Interest it self causeth us to desire, and diligently to seek for, as being our own proper advantage.



The Third Treatise.

Of the several means by which God is Tempted.



Here are certain Duties which all Christians know to a certain degree, and which are very much unknown to them beyond this degree, which happens ordinarily, that not penetrating into the true Principles of them, they are not able to comprehend their extent. The prohibition that God hath made us of Tempting him is properly of this kind. Few persons are ignorant that God thereby orders us not to be idle when we have in our power human means which we can employ. But as we know not

why,

178 *Of the several means by*

why God forbids us to neglect these human means, we rest there, and we heed by so much the less to instruct our selves in this Precept, by how much it seems that there is nothing more rare than to tempt God in this manner; human understanding being infinitely more inclin'd to fix it self too much to human means, through a want of Confidence in God, then to neglect them through an Excess of Trust. 'Tis this which gives a belief that it would not be unprofitable to explicate at large what it is to tempt God, and to declare the Grounds and Principles of the Prohibition which God makes us thereof.

2. God is not only Sovereignly powerful, he is also Sovereignly Wise in his Conduct. As being powerful he is the chief Original of all things, whether in the corporal and visible World, or in the invisible or Spiritual World. As being wise he operates all things by certain means, and in a certain order, which is not less essential to his Providence than the Power it self by which he operates them.

3. The pride and disorder of Men tend equally to withdraw them from the Power

Power and Wisdom of God; as solid Piety tends to humble them more and more to the one and the other. To withdraw themselves from this Power, some have denied absolutely the Providence, and the Operation of God; even in natural things, like the Epicureans. Others have denied it in Spiritual things, and in the actions of our Souls, which lead us to Eternal Happiness or misery, like the *Pelagians*. And others not daring to go to this excess of Impiety, have not stuck to deny it him in the distinction of good Men and bad, in the Elect and Reprobate, like the *Semipelagians*.

4. But the manner how Men withdraw themselves from the Wisdom of God, being no less criminal, is much more unknown. And 'tis this which they call tempting of God which is a sin few people comprehend.

It depends in the withdrawing themselves from the order of God, and pretending to make it act according to our phantasie, in neglecting the consequence of the means, to which he fixeth ordinarily the effects of his Divine Power. And to conceive in what manner we fall thereinto, as to what regards the

the life of the Soul, 'tis but to consider how we may fall thereinto, as to what regards the life of the body.

5. It is manifest, that 'tis God who maintains our being and our Life; and that he is not less properly the cause thereof, than if he made it subsist by a visible Miracle, independant of all exterior means. We maintain it by food. But who is it that produceth this food? *It was not, saith St. Augustin, neither my Mother, nor my Nurses, who replenished their breasts for me with milk which they gave me, but it was thee, O Lord: It was only thee, who gave me by their help the nourishment I had need of according to the natural Order which thou hast established, and according to the riches of thy Bounty and Providence, who diffusest thy Cares even into the most secret Principles, and the most hidden causes of the subsistence of thy Creatures. Thou art the Author of all Good; O my God; and I owe thee all the Conservation of my life.*

6. Whether he make us live after this manner, or after an extraordinary and miraculous manner, 'tis always he who acts and maintains us. And thus we are obliged to acknowledge his All-powerfull Hand and Operation, whether he

he conceal or disclose it. But yet there is this difference betwixt these two ways, whereby he acts upon the Souls and bodies. That the first is the common way by which he guides his Creatures, and the other an extraordinary way whereof he seldom makes use, and which hath no certain rules. 'Tis in the first that the order of Providence, which he permits men to know, consists; and the second includes only certain effects and causes which of our selves we can never foresee, because the counsels according to which God produceth them at one time, and does not produce them at another, are too sublime for the wit of man.

7. His Wisdom being therefore debased to hide ordinarily his divine Operation by human means, it is just that men should humble themselves by these means, and it is a great pride in them to neglect them, and to pretend to constrain God to act in an extraordinary manner, of which he hath not made us capable of penetrating to the bottom. 'Tis this which is properly called tempting God, as Jesus Christ teacheth us in the Gospel. For the Devil urging him to cast himself from the top of the Temple

ple to the bottom, in alledging to him that 'tis written; that God hath commanded his Angels to uphold the Just, and to hinder them from hurting themselves against the stones, Jesus Christ resisted him, telling him, that 'tis written, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, supposing that it would be tempting God, to pretend that he ought to cause his Angels to uphold a Just Man, who should expose himself rashly to this danger in leaving the common way which consists in avoiding it.

Aug. 1.

22. contr.

Faust. c. 36

8. St. *Austin* grounded this Maxim of Christian Morality upon the Example of Jesus Christ and St. *Paul*; "Holy Doctrine teacheth us, saith he, that
 "when we are able to employ these human means, 'tis to tempt God to neglect them; the Redeemer wanted not power to secure his Disciples by miracles, and yet he ordered them that
 "if they were persecuted in one City, to flee to another, and he hath been willing also to shew them the example of this Conduct in his own Person.
 "For altho he was Master absolutely of his life, and that no man could take it away without his consent, he hath not
 "omitted

omitted in his Infancy to flie death by
flight, in causing his Parents to carry
him into Egypt. The Gospel also ob-
serves that once he would not go pub-
lickly to the Feast of Easter, altho
at other times he had spoken to the
Jews without hiding himself, even
when they were the most in wrath a-
gainst him, and heard what he said
to them with more hatred, because
they were not able to lay hands upon
him, his time not being come. 'Tis
not that that time could force him to
die, but 'tis because he had chosen it
willingly to suffer the Jews to take a-
way his life. Thus he hath shewn the
power of a God, when instructing and
reproving his enemies publickly, he did
not permit their rage to have any
power over him; but in flying and
hiding himself he hath instructed the
weakness of Man not to tempt God
in neglecting to do what he was able
to guard himself from the mischiefs
which he ought to avoid. The A-
postle St. Paul did not despair of
Gods Help, nor had not lost Faith,
when he caused himself to be let
down in a Basket from the top of the
walls of Damascus, to free himself from
fal-

“falling into the hands of his enemies;
 “and his flight did not denote that his
 “Faith was void, but only that he would
 “not tempt God, as he should have
 “done, in omitting this means of saving
 “himself.

9. 'Tis yet by the same Principles,
 and by the same examples that this Ho-
 ly Doctor doth confute, in the Book he
 writ *of the Labour of Religions*; the vain
 imaginations of certain *Affrican* Monks
 who would not labour, because it is
 said in the Gospel, *that God doth nourish*
the fowls of the air, altho they neither sow
nor reap, in establishing against them
 this admirable Rule which forbids men
 to tempt God, and at the same time
 teaches them not to be less unmindfull
 of him, when he nourishes them by their
 labour, then if he procured them their
 food without contributing to it at all on
 their part. “If there happen, saith he,
 “to us infirmities and troubles, which
 “hinder us from labouring, we ought
 “to hope that God will feed us as he
 “doth the fowls in the air, and clothe
 “us as he clothes the Lillies, neither
 “the fowls nor lillies contributing any
 “any thing thereunto. But being in a
 “condition to labour, we ought not to
 “tempt

"tempt God by neglecting to do it ;
"being the power of doing it is a gift
"of God, so that in procuring by this
"means what is necessary to keep us a-
"live; 'tis alwas from God we receive
"it, because 'tis from him we receive
"the power of labouring for our li-
"ving.

10. Thus it would be to tempt God to refuse what is necessary to keep us alive, under pretence that God can keep us alive without the help of food. A Governour would tempt God if he should not make preparation to defend the place he hath Command of, against the enemy; under pretence that it is written; *If God defend not the City, the Guard watcheth in vain.* For altho he can conserve it in effect, as he did *Jerusalem* again the Army of *Sennacherib*; yet the ordinary way whereby he saved the Cities, was to inspire the Captains with vigilance, and the Souldiers with courage. And generally it may be said, that all dull and lazy People in some sort tempt God; because they neglect the means by which Gods Grace and Assistance is obtained.

11. Nor is there any but God who knows all the reasons why he conceals his

186 *Of the several means by*

his operations under certain causes, which appear all Natural. We know only some of them. By this means he withdraws men from idleness, he obliges them to vigilance and labour, he employs and exercises them, he punishes them by these painfull and laborious employments, he makes them set a great value on those things which cost them most pains. But it may be said that one of his principal designs, is, to hide himself, and to make his conduct unknown to those who are unworthy to know it.

12. If he did always act after a miraculous manner, we should be as it were forced to acknowledge him in every thing, and this evidence would not be conform neither to his Justice nor Mercy: He is by his Justice to suffer the wicked to continue in the dark, which inclines and makes them doubt of his Providence, and of his Being, and he is by his Mercy to keep his Chosen privately from vanity by this wholesome obscurity.

The life of Faith which is the life of the Just in this world, consisting then in serving God without seeing him in a sensible manner, it is evident that
con-

continual miracles would destroy this state absolutely.

Thus it is necessary that God act on one part, and on the other that we do not know his action sensibly, he must hide himself under a certain means, which would appear as it were natural; and which being always exposed to view, should not stir up their admiration, that it might only be discovered by those whose eyes he should open by a Light which he gives to whom he shall think fit.

13. But if it were necessary that God should conceal himself in this manner in the Order of Nature, and in the outward effects he produceth on the body, it were not less necessary that he should conceal himself in his inward Operations upon the Soul; because the evidence of the Divine Operation in these kind of actions, withdraws not the Soul less from the state of Faith, by which he desires that she should work out her Salvation in this life. And therefore he gives not ordinarily his greatest Graces, but by a consequent of means which appear quite Human and ordinary, and which seem humanly proportioned to the end for which they are ordained.

He.

He wills us to desire Vertues, to labour to acquire them, to seek out means to practise them, to separate our selves from things which may carry us to sin. 'Tis he who breathes these desires into us, who operates in us these labours and pains, and who makes us lop off these impediments. It would be facile for him to give us Vertue without this consequent means, but in giving them us in this order, and by these means he hides himself from us, and conserves us in humility.

14. In the same manner he might advertise us every moment what we have to do; but if he did in this manner it would be a Conduct visibly miraculous. He wills us then that we foresee our actions and our words, that we consider them before him, that we may govern them according to his Laws; and that we may employ all the care we possibly can to acknowledge what he wills us, and requires of us in each rencounter. He himself is the Author of these preparations, of this Enquiry, of this Care; and he makes use of them, as an ordinary means to communicate to us the Wisdom which we have need of for our Conduct.

15. 'Tis

15. 'Tis true that Jesus Christ said to his Disciples, that they ought not to be troubled for what they shall say to Kings and Princes when they shall force them to appear before them, because it shall be given to them even at the hour it self what they ought to answer them. But Jesus Christ's design in this admonition was only to exclude the foreseeings and the reflections of despair and Self-love: And he would rather dispose them not to be astonished, when they are obliged to speak to Kings, being unprepared, then to forbid them to prepare themselves for it. Likewise when Jesus Christ forbad his Disciples to be troubled at the want of food and clothes, he did not forbid them according to the Fathers, reasonable care and precautions, nor obliged them to expect that God should procure them the one and the other by extraordinary ways; he only commanded them to banish inquietudes and distrusts from their hearts, which are hurtfull to his Providence, and to his Bounty and Goodness, which hinder them from seeking the Kingdom of God before all other things.

16. Thus there be often apparent contrarieties in Christian Truths, when
we

we only look upon them with a superficial sight, which disappears and vanisheth, when penetrated to the bottom.

We may believe, for example, to follow only the first Light which springs from an imperfect knowledge of Truth, that Christian Life being a Supernatural Life, and which is above all human strength, we ought not rather to choose one kind of life more than another, nor to trouble our selves to avoid the occasions of sinning. We can do all with God, one will say, but we can do nothing without his help. Thus with the aid and help of God I can continue immoveable in the most dangerous occasions, and without this aid I cannot uphold my self in the most sure retreats.

But those who speak in this manner, comprehend not the secret of the Conduct of Grace. 'Tis true, God is able to boye us up in the greatest perils; and he does it sometimes when 'tis he himself who engages us therein; but 'tis but seldom that he gives his Grace in so conspicuous a manner. Thus to make us resist temptations, he inspires into us the care and means to avoid them. This is the ordinary way, and whoever neglects

glects it hath no right to pretend that God upholds him after another manner.

17. If one were ordinarily as recollected in business, as in quiet and repose; If one sunk down oftentimes no more in temptations living in the occasions of sin, than in the way of avoiding them; If one contracted no more spots in trading with the World, than by living a retired life; If great Employments swayed us not more to vanity, than mean and base employments; it would undoubtedly be a kind of visible miracle, God acteth in this sort when he pleaseth, for some chosen Souls. But as he will not that his Conduct over us, appear so visibly miraculous, he does it not very often, and he obliges us thereby to reduce our selves to the ordinary way, and to prefer as much as we can repose before action, a retired life before great Employments; And lastly, the flying all occasions, before a confidence which leads us to expose our selves thereto. Not that it not as facile for God to save as well in one manner as another, but he hath taught us that ordinarily he saves us in the second manner, because he is there more private and

and less known; and by that means he obligeth us to reduce our selves thereunto.

18. 'Tis upon this method of Grace, and this consequence of means under which God hides his Supernatural Operations, that all the Rules, and all the Spiritual Counsels are grounded, which the Saints inspir'd by God, have given to those whom they have conducted in these means.

These great Saints are not ignorant that 'tis from him all Virtues must be expected, and that he is the cause of all the good actions Christians perform. They were perswaded that he is the Master of mens Hearts, and that he operates in them what he will by an Invincible and an All-powerfull force. Nevertheless they prescribe Rules and practises, as Philosophers might do, who would pretend to obtain Virtue by their own proper force. They will have us to keep our minds always busied about holy thoughts; that we apply our selves without intermission to the reading, and to the studying the Word of God; that we live as it were separate from the World; that we reduce our bodies into bondage by labour and mortification;

tification; that we avoid all that may weaken us, or be an occasion of our fall; that we make a continual tryal upon our selves to resist our passions; that we lead a life uniform, orderly, and not idle, passing by an infinite number of actions prescribed us, as more conform to our condition and to our duty. 'Tis not that they did not know perfectly, that God is able to bestow on us his greatest Graces without making us pass through these exercises, but they knew at the same time that the common order of his Providence is, not to grant us them, but persuant to these exercises, and by these exercises themselves; and thus he grants in the first place to Souls the Grace to practise them, to make them afterwards to arrive to the Vertues whereunto he desires to raise them, being the Author as well of the actions which he makes them perform to acquire these Vertues, as of Vertues which they acquire by these actions.

19. Nor is there any thing more easie to God then to make us know from time to time our faults, by the infusion of a Light which will place them at once before our eyes. He might likewise correct

rect us for them in giving us contrary Vertues, without our being obliged to be troubled continually at the sight of our Miseries. But the Saints who know the ways which God makes use of generally to cleanse Souls, forget not to recommend to us this diligent examination and care of our Souls, as one of the chief Duties of Piety, which ought not to end but with our life. Brethren, saith St. Augustine, in expecting the coming

Hom. 15. of this happy day, wherein we shall be joyned with the Angels of Heaven, to Praise God for all Eternity; In expecting till we be arrived at this ineffable joy which we hope for, let us apply our selves as much as we can to the Practice of good Works; let us daily examine our Consciences, and carefully look that there be nothing broken and torn in the Spiritual Robes of our Souls, that we have not received some spots through Intemperance, that we have not burnt them through Choler, nor divided them through Envy, that we have not tarnished their Lustre through Avarice. Let us make haste to Cure those Wounds of our Souls, whilst we have yet the Power with the aid of Grace.

20. The great St. Gregory, whom God hath given particularly to his Church,

to instruct her with Rules of a spiritual life, recommends nothing so much in his Morals as this Vigilance and Care of our selves, and this diligent examination of good and bad actions. *We must, saith*

he, purifie the Actions even
Greg. Mor. l. 1. of Virtue, by an exact dis-
c. 17 & 18. cussion, for fear of taking bad

for good, and what is imperfect and defe-
ctive for very perfect. 'Tis that which is
hinted to us by the Sacrifice which Job
Offered for each of his Children. For 'tis
Offering a Sacrifice to God for each of his
Children to Offer him prayers for each Act
of Virtue; for fear that Wisdom should puff
him up, that Intelligence should make him
pray, that Prudence should puzzle and con-
found him, that Force should make him pre-
sumptuous. And because Holocaust is a
Sacrifice which is absolutely consumed, 'tis
necessary that our Soul be burnt by the fire
of Compunction, and that she consume in this
fire all that she hath of impure in her thoughts.
But no man is able to do it, if he be not
careful to examin all his inward motions, be-
fore he proceed to Actions. This Saint

saith yet, We must bruise Per-
sumes, that is to say consider a-
part all that passeth in the Soul, and reduce
it as it were into dust by this examination.

196 *Of the several means by*
We must take off the skin of the Victim, and
cut it into bits, that is to say we must take
from our Actions this outward Surface,
which makes them appear to us virtuous,
that we may see even to the bottom of
them.

This instruction is often repeated in St. Gregories Works, that one may say that 'tis the principal Foundation of his spiritual Conduct, and far from exempting the Just more advanced in this Practice, he on the contrary placeth their advancement in the encreasing this Care and Vigilance, and in this attention upon themselves.

21. Saint *Barnard* hath writ four Books to bring Souls to this exercise of examining their Actions and Conduct before God; and he makes it the cheif Duty of a Christian life; but to shew in a word the *Idea* he had of true Piety, he says, *That 'tis to apply ones self to consider what one is. Quid est Pietas? Vacare Considerationi;* and that this Consideration consists in foreseeing ones actions to regulate them before God, to correct ones faults, and to think what is ones Duty. And 'tis remarkable that this Saint gives not these instructions to a Novice, but to a great Pope, whom
he

he ought to imagin in a state of Perfection, having been raised to this first dignity of the Church for his eminent Virtues.

22. When the Philosophers, who supposed that Virtue hath no other Source but Nature, prescribed Rules to attain it, they prescribed no other then these above. They recommended to us, like these Saints, this examination, and this continual care and vigilance over our actions, as may be seen in the Verses attributed to *Pythagoras*, and in several places of *Seneca*. Did not St. *Augustine*, St. *Gregory*, and St. *Barnard* know that Virtue is a pure effect of the mercy of God, and not of our endeavours and reflections? Doubtless they knew it, seeing that they taught it in so many places of their Books; but likewise they knew that God did not give it ordinarily to men, but by the practice of certain means and exercises, to which he applies them by his Grace. And thus the principal care of those who have the Charge of Souls is to put them in the way of practicing these means, by which they may obtain God's Grace, and that it is tempting him to act otherways, and to desire that he may grant us

198 *Of the several means by*

them by some other way then that which his Wisdom hath cholen, and which he hath given us to understand by the example of all the Saints.

23. Wherefore do men believe that the Fathers have testified so much doubt of those who do not think of being converted, except at the hour of death? Is it because 'tis not as easie for God to touch sinners by his Grace at the last moment as at another time; or that that of death is excluded from the general Promise, which God hath made to Men to receive them into his Grace if they be Converted sincerely? Without doubt 'tis nothing of that, God is alway equally powerfull, and the bosom of his Mercy is always equally open to converted Sinners. But 'tis because the Fathers have thought that these Conversions were not generally speaking sincere, and that they were rather an effect of the state wherein they found themselves, than an alteration of the heart. And the reason of it is, that in the common way the Heart doth not change thus all at once the object and the end. Outward Actions may be changed easily in an instant; but Love which holds the principal place of the Heart scarcely

scarcely changes in an instant. It must, ordinarily speaking, be discouraged by little and little, and that there be another to take its place by divers progresses. 'Tis thus that Human passions are changed, and God who wills that the Operations of his Grace be not sensibly distinguished from those of Nature, follows commonly the same method. He begins to shake the Heart through fear, before he touch it with his Love, and he often touches it a long time by beginnings of Love, before he makes himself master of it by a ruling Love, which turns the heart towards him as towards its last end, and which frees and delivers it from the bondage of the love of Creatures. Thus as the Conversion of dying sinners cannot pass through these degrees, it must be miraculous to be true. The Church despairs not of this Miracle, which is the reason why she grants the Sacraments to dying People: But she fears mightily that these Sentiments which appear in sinners in this state, are only those light beginnings either of the Fear or of the Love of God, which are not sufficient for a true and hearty Conversion. And 'tis this which obliges sinners not only to

200 *Of the several means by*
labour, but also to make hast to labour
seriously for their Salvation; that their
love may have time to increase, and to
arrive unto a condition that one may be
able to say they are truly Converted.
To act otherways is to tempt God,
nay, and to tempt him after a most
dangerous manner, in willing him to do
a Miracle in the Order of his Grace; to
save us. And in this fashion all those
who expect to be Converted to God at
their death, besides their other sins, do
yet commit that of tempting God,
which often causes the very utmost of
it.

24. Spiritual Riches are all gratis as
from God, and yet it is written; That
the hands of those who labour strongly
heap up Riches. *Manus fortium divitias
parat.* And the Scripture attributes on
the contrary Spiritual poverty to the
want of this Labour. *Egestatem operata
est manus remissa*, that is to say, that
negligence and sloth cause the poverty,
and the misery of Souls; so great a care
hath God to hide the works of his
Grace under the resemblance of those of
Nature.

25. Prayer is doubtless that of all
Christian actions wherein the need of
Grace

Grace appears most. Therefore the Spirit of God is called by a particular Title, the Spirit of Prayers, *Spiritus Precum*. And it is said of him, that he prays by unspeakable sighs. It would seem then that this so Divine exercise should need neither preparation nor rules, and that it had nothing to do, but to expect the Inspiration of Grace. And yet the Wise man advises us expressly, that we must prepare the Soul before Prayer, for fear of being like those who tempt God; *Ante Orationem prepara Animam tuam, & noli esse quasi homo, qui tentat Deum*: Shewing thus, that all those who pray being unprepared, fall into the sin of tempting God, and that one of the principal causes of the Lukewarmness in our Prayers, is the little care we have to prepare our selves thereunto, by the means prescribed to us by Scripture, which consists in withdrawing our hearts, and minds from wandring and vain amusements, that we may find them again when they must be presented to God in Prayer, being impossible that the heart doth not run after its Treasure, and busie its self with the objects it possesseth.

26. 'Tis thus that truth unites what

K-5

appears

appears contrary to those who know it but imperfectly. All depends on God, therefore we must labour, say certain Hereticks, we must not labour. Therefore Virtue depends not on Grace, say the *Pelagians*. But the Catholick Doctrine consists in uniting these Truths, and casting away the false conclusions. We must labour faith this Doctrine, and yet all depends on God. Labour is an effect of Grace, and the ordinary means to obtain Grace, to think that labour and virtues are not the Gifts of God, is a *Pelagian* presumption. To slight the means God makes use of generally to communicate his Grace to Men, is to tempt God in subverting the order of his Wisdom. Thus Piety consists in practising these means, and acknowledging that 'tis God who makes us practise them.

27. I know well that human Understanding, which is dazzled by the splendour of Divine Truths, and which is puzzled with its vain reasonings, may yet find difficulty in this alliance of Labour and Grace, and in supposing with *St. Austin* and *St. Thomas*, that what power one may have to do acts of Piety by other Graces, they are never done
 effe-

effectually, unless God determine the will by efficacious Grace. He is easily inclined to conclude that we need only continue in repose, untill we perceive these efficacious motions, which make us practise them; that when we shall perceive them we shall not fail to labour, being that Grace will apply us thereto by a Virtue all powerful, and not having them, it is certain that we shall practice them only in an unprofitable manner.

'Tis an objection which comes easily into the minds of those who follow their own reasoning in these matters, which regard the Conduct of God upon Souls. The Fathers who were not ignorant thereof have answered thereto in divers solid ways, by shewing after what manner it may be truly said; that it is always in mans Power to satisfy the duties of Christian Piety, and that 'tis their fault if they do not accomplish them.

28. But as it is not convenient to answer thereunto in a Theological way, it is enough to shew that it hath nothing of Solidity, even according to human reason, and that the necessity we have of efficacious Grace to Practice Christian Virtues, may well serve to humble

204. *Of the several means by*
ble men, and to keep them in a state
of fear and trembling; but that it can
never justly carry them neither to Idleness,
to Trouble, nor despair, because
we have always by nature it self a means
which sufficeth to keep our minds in
quiet, and to banish away trouble and
inquietude. The reason is, that altho
to labour according to God, to resist
our faults like Christians, to Pray, and
to practice good Works by the spirit
of true Charity, we have need of effi-
cacious and supernatural Grace. It is
nevertheless certain that each of these
actions in particular may be done some-
times without Grace, by a motive of Self-
love and human Respect, and by a fear
purely servile. Now though there be
an infinite difference betwixt Self-love
and the love of God, nevertheless the
motives and the actions which spring
from these two principles so different
are sometimes so like, and we have so
little light to penetrate to the bottom
of our hearts, that we do not distinguish
with certainty by what Principle we act,
and whether through Covetousness or
through Charity. We may well say
with *St. Paul*, That we do not think
our selves guilty of any thing, but we
ought

ought to joyn with him, that for all that we are not Justified, and that we cannot Judge our selves, because we do not know our selves perfectly.

We have therefore always a principle in us to accomplish what there is of outward shew in these exercises of a Christian life. And as we are not able to know certainly when we have efficacious Grace, except it be by a human Principle that we act, likewise we cannot always know when we act by a Principle of human Interest, Grace not being the principle of our Action. We may take Charity for Self-love, and Self-love for Charity, and in this obscurity Reason obliges us to take a resolution to do always what is Commanded, leaving to God the determination of the Principle which makes us act.

'Tis not that our endeavour to purifie our selves is not requisite, as much as is possible from all self-love, and from all Interest; but this desire does not assure us that we are exempt. For one may desire through Self-love to be freed from Self-love; as one may wish for Humility through Pride. It makes it self an infinite Circle of reflections upon reflections on those actions of the Soul, and

and there is always in us a certain bottom and Root which remains unknown to us our whole life time.

'Tis the State wherein God wills that men live in this World. We are condemned to these obscurities by his Justice, and his Mercy renders them advantageous to us, when it causeth us to make use of it to become more humble. And thus it is manifest that these Obscurities being unavoidable on the one part, and on the other useful, what we have to do, is to rest in quiet, and to adore in Peace the Goodness of God who ordains them for our good, and to act nevertheless the most sincerely, and the most disinterestedly that possibly we can, which is prescrib'd us by his Laws, in expecting the Judgment he will lay upon us in the other life in making us know the bottom of our hearts, which we shall never know clearly in this.

The which sufficeth at least to procure us a human peace, which is not easily distinguished from the Peace of God, and which is always worth more then trouble which overwhelms the Soul, and reduceth her to Idleness and Despair.

29. This reason ought to make us prefer the practice of all the exercises of
of

of a Christian life, before a soft, negligent, and slothful life, because it is certain, that those who do not practice them are in a wrong way, and that few of those who pass their lives in disorder will be saved, seeing that it cannot be, unless God Convert them by an extraordinary Mercy, which is very rare in the order of Grace it self.

On the contrary those who practice these holy exercises, are all in some sort in the way of Peace, they are in the company of those who go to Heaven, and have also this comfort, That there are very few of those who shall practice them a long time, who arrive not at happiness; perseverance in an orderly life being the most certain mark of Charity, because Cupidity is Wavering of it self, and continues not long in the persuance of one and the same design.

30. Thus the knowledge of the need and want of efficacious Grace, to act like a Christian, doth indeed never puzzle those who hearken to and follow Reason; because they always see their way. They know they must pray to God without intermission, mortify continually their Passions, always keep a Guard upon themselves, strive even to Death for
Victory,

208 *Of the several means by*

Victory, never to be tired with practicing good Works, and to be ruled in all things. They know that the incertainty wherein they are, whether it be Grace or Self-love which moves them to act, ought never to hinder them from acting. *Perform, perform these things, faith-*

St. Augustin, through fear of
Aug. Ser. 13. Punishment, if ye cannot do
de Verb. Ap. them for the love of Justice,
 that is to say for, Charity. They ought then to practice them always: 'Tis what is certain and indubitable, and in practicing them they ought not to judge that they act only by covetousness and interest, seeing that their hearts are unknown to them, and that they ought not to judge rashly of themselves, no more then of others.

31. In a word we must Pray, Labour, and live in quiet even to Death, in abandoning our selves to God, and saying to him with the Prophet, *In manus tuas Sortes meae. My Lot is in thy hands,* both for this life and the life to come, for the present, and for Eternity. Marching in this sort in the ways of God with a persevering Fidelity, if we never have absolutely a certainty that the holy Ghost dwels in us, and that

'tis he who causeth us to act, we shall not forbear nevertheless to have thereof a just confidence, and this confidence encreasing more and more according as we shall advance in Virtue, will only leave us so much fear as is necessary to resist the Tentation of Presumption and Pride.

32. There are yet many other ways of tempting God besides those we have set down. For as this sin consists in withdrawing our selves from the wisdom of God, and in obliging us to act contrary to the ordinary rules of his Prudence, whether in the order of Nature, or in that of Grace, we may tempt God in as many fashions as we can dispense with these rules, in hopes that God will act towards us in an extraordinary manner.

For Example, 'tis tempting God to engage our selves in Charges of the Church without meet and convenient Vocation, flattering our selves with the hopes that God will rectifie our entrance, and will not forbear to grant us the necessary Graces to acquit our selves of the Charge which we have rashly undertaken. Because the ordinary way to obtain necessary Graces for this employ, is

is to enter thereupon by the dore of holy Vocation; and if God repair this fault in some in making them enter again as it were anew into the Charge which they have usurped, 'tis an extraordinary favour which no man can promise himself without rashness and tempting God.

33. It is the very same with all other engagements in the several conditions of this life. We tempt God when we enter into them without a reasonable assurance, That we have necessary dispositions to acquit our selves of the obligations which are belonging to them. A man who enters into Office tempts God, if he do not perceive in himself a force able to resist Injustice, according as the Scripture saith, *Noli querere fieri Iudex, nisi valeas perrumpere Iniquitates.* Those who engage themselves in Mariage tempt God, unless they be disposed to satisfy the Obligations of that State, and have strength enough to suffer all that must be born withall therein, and to bear up against the temptations which are either from this state in general, or from the particular choice which they make of the party they marry. They who embrace a religious life tempt God, if they have
not

not fit qualities to persevere in that holy Vocation, and to undergo pains and labour. And therefore those who exclude such as have not these qualities, far from doing them an injury, do them on the contrary the greatest Charity which could be done them; being they hinder them from contracting an engagement, the consequences whereof could not be prosperous to them. Lastly, what enterprise men form to themselves, what design of life men undertake, what State and Condition men embrace, they must always, according to the Gospel, compute the Charges, that is to say, examine what strength God hath given them, and what willingness, to Judge thereby if they be not too fool hardy in engaging themselves therein.

34. If we do but reflect on mens Conduct in the choice of the employment and state wherein they pass their lives, we shall find that there is not only nothing more common then this manner of tempting God, but that 'tis the most ordinary Source of Confusion which Reigns in all States and Conditions. For it is clear that we do not choose them through the consideration of the relation, and the proportion they have with
the

the dispositions which God hath put in us, but through certain Laws of Opinion which mens Vanity hath established in the World; according to which we believe, that being of such and such a Birth, and that having a certain quantity of Goods, we cannot but embrace such kind of lives, and that all others are against our interest. In this manner there are some who think that there is no other way to be taken for them then that of the Sword, or an Ecclesiastical Profession: Others are of opinion that they cannot live in the World, except they be Magistrates. This Daughter must be Religious, because in the condition she is she cannot be Married. Thus we reduce our selves to a straight by these Chimerical Laws; and as God follows them not in the distribution of his Talents and Graces, it happens from thence that we strictly forbid, through fancy all employments which God permits us, and are very remiss in performing those he commands us. We engage our selves therein therefore rashly, and likewise continue therein; we tempt God continually by the exercise of these ill chosen employments, and instead of getting his favour and assistance,

we get, without intermission, the effects of his wrath, and the loss of his Friendship. One may easily imagin what must be the consequences of this Conduct.

35. We must observe yet upon this subject, that although men in this life be always in a continual want of Grace, they are not nevertheless in an equal degree of weakness and strength, and that the different measure wherewith God distributes his Grace to them, makes according to the language of the Fathers and holy Scripture, that we may say there are works and employments proportionable to the Grace of certain Souls, but which are not so to others. There are some who would lose themselves in striving to imitate certain actions of Saints, because they want the power and force to undergo them like these Saints. It is requisite then that each know what he has received from God, and if he is not able to judge thereof by himself, let him judge thereof at least by the light of understanding persons. Otherwise in advancing himself beyond the gifts God hath given him, he tempts him, and is in danger of committing many great faults by those rash advances.

36. God having been willing to conjoyn men together by these reciprocal endeavours or Duties of Charity, to render them dependant one of another, as well in respect of a spiritual as a temporal life, and communicating to them for that purpose more ordinarily the light they have need of for their Guide, by the means of Pastors and Spiritual persons, which they may consult as well as by himself, from thence it follows that 'tis also to tempt God in some sort not to submit to the order, in refusing any ones Counsel, and following only in the conduct of their life, their own proper thoughts and reasons; because this is to oblige God to communicate his light to us in an extraordinary manner.

37. It may be said also, that every mortal sin which we commit in hopes to be absolved thereof by Penance, is one way of Tempting God. For the Ordinary way of Salvation, whether for those who as yet have not lost the innocence of Baptism, or for those who have repaired it by Penance, is to conserve the Grace they have received, and to labour to augment and encrease it every day by the exercise of Christian Vertues.

To

To pretend then that God will make us reenter into the way of Salvation, although we lost it by grievous crimes, is to withdraw our selves from his ordinary Conduct, and to force him to do, in the order of his Grace, Miracles in our behalf.

38. Lastly, even just men, and persons living orderly tempt God in many ways, and often when they are not aware of it. For the Gospel tells us that the means to obtain grace requisite for us, whether to acquit our selves of our Obligations, or to enter safely into the least engagements, and form the least design is to consult God upon all occasions, and to pray to him continually ; every time they neglect to practice this means, and engage themselves in small and trivial enterprises, in visits, in conversations, in works of Piety, without applying themselves to God, without looking towards him, without advising with him, without praying to him, in some sort it may be said, that they Tempt God. And as all the faults which we commit in our life time happens through a neglect of practicing the means to avoid them, it is evident that men sin not, but because they

216 *Of the several means by*
they Tempt God, and thus this sin
which they think on so rarely, and
which they dream so little of, is the
cause of all Just mens fallings, and the
los of all those who perish.

The



The Fourth Treatise.

Of Plays.

1.



T hath scarcely been known but in this Age, that men have undertaken to justifie Plays, and to make them pass as Recre-

ations which might be joyn'd with Devotion. Former Ages were more simple and sincere in good and bad. Those who made profession of Piety, did witness by their actions and words, the horror they had for those Profane Sights. Those who were possessed with passion for a Theater, acknowledged at least, that they did not follow in that the Rules of Christian Religion. But in this Age there are found those who

L

have

have pretended in this point to be able to conjoyn Piety, and the Spirit of the World together. They are not content to follow vice, they will have it honoured, and that it be not withered and decayed by the shamefull name of Vice, which always troubles a little the pleasure which they take therein, by the horror which accompanies it. They have therefore endeavoured to act in some sort, that Conscience might be accommodated with passion, and not to come and trouble it by its importunate Remorses. And this is it they have taken so much pains about, upon the Subject of Plays. For as there is hardly any Recreation more agreeable to worldly People than that, so it was very important for them to assure themselves thereby of a sweet and quiet enjoying of it, to the end that nothing should be wanting to complear their satisfaction. The means which those undertook who were the cunningest, was to form to themselves a certain Metaphysical Idea of Comedies, and to purifie this Idea from all kind of sin. Plays, say they, are a representation of Actions and Words, as it were present. What harm therein I pray? And after having justified

fixed in this sort the general Idea of Plays; they think that they have proved that there is no sin in them, and in conclusion they go to them without any scruple. But the way to free themselves of this Illusion, is to consider on the contrary, Plays not in a Chimerical Speculation, but in the common and ordinary practice, whereof we are witnesses. We must take notice what is the life of Actors and Players, what is the substance and end of Plays, what effects they generally produce in the minds of those who represent them, or who see them acted or represented; what impressions they leave in them, and afterwards to examin if all that have any relation to the Life, Sentiments, and the Duties of a true Christian. This is it that's design'd to be done in this Treatise. But as the generality of Reasons men make use of, tend naturally to the reading of Romances, they may be easily comprehended therein, and those who read this are intreated to comprehend them therein, when they are not expressly mention'd in this.

2. 'Tis impossible to consider the Trade of Players and Actors, and to compare them with Christian Professi-

cn, but we must acknowledge that there is nothing more unworthy a Child of God, and Member of Jesus Christ than this sort of Employment. We do not speak only of the gross abuses, and the dissolute manner Women appear upon the stage, because the upholders of Plays, separate always these sort of disorders by imagination, altho never effectively. We speak only of what is entirely and absolutely inseperable. 'Tis a recreation which tends to the divertisement of others, where Men and Women represent passions of hatred and choler, ambition, revenge, and chiefly of Love. They must express them the most naturally and the liveliest, that possibly they can, and they cannot do it unless they stir up in some sort these passions in themselves, and that they be imprinted in their Souls, that they may express them outwardly by actions and words. Those then who express a passion of Love, must be touched in some manner with that passion whilst they act it, and they cannot think that this Impression which they have excited so willingly, can be forgotten suddenly, and that it should not leave in them a great inclination for this same Passion, which they

they were willing to resent. Thus Plays are by their nature the Schools and exercises of vice, being that they excite in us necessarily vitious Passions. What if we consider that the whole life of Players is employed in this exercise; that they pass it absolutely to learn in particular, or to repeat amongst themselves, or to act before the Spectators the image of some vice; that they have nothing almost in their minds but these follies: It will be easie to see that 'tis impossible to accord this Trade or Calling with the Purity of our Religion. And thus it must be allowed to be an Employ profane, and unbecoming a Christian; that those who follow it are obliged to leave it, as all the Councils do command: and that consequently 'tis not permitted to others to contribute to entertain them in a profession contrary to Christianity, nor to authorise it by their Presence.

3. As the passion of Love is the strongest impression which sin hath made upon our Souls, which appers clearly enough by the horrible disorders it produceth in the World, so there is nothing more dangerous than to excite it to nourish it, and to destroy what restrains and

stops its course. Now that which helps most thereto is a certain horror, which custom and good Education imprints therein; and nothing lessens this horror more than Plays, because this passion appears there with honour, and in a manner, which instead of rendring it horrible, is capable on the contrary to cause it to be loved. It appears there without shame or infamy. There they boast of being touched with it. Thus the Mind is insnared by little and little. They learn how to suffer it, and how to speak of it; and the Soul afterwards is easily caught with it in following the propensity of Nature.

4. 'Tis needless to say in justification of Plays and Romances, that therein is only represented lawfull Passions, and which have marriage as the end they aim at. For tho Marriage may make good use of Concupiscence, 'tis nevertheless in it self always ill, and it is not lawfull to excite it, neither in our selves nor in others. We ought always to look upon it as the shamefull effect of sin, as a source of poison able to infect us every moment, if God stop not the bad causes of it. Thus from some apparent honesty, wherewith Plays and Romances endea-

endeavour to cloath it, we cannot deny but even in that, -they are contrary to good manners, being that they imprint an agreeable Idea of a vicious Passion, and that they make of it an Heroick quality, there being none which appears with more splendor, then that in these Heroes of the Plays.

5. Marriage checks Concupiscence, but makes it not orderly. It restrains always something of disorder which is proper to it, and it is not but by force that it keeps it self within the limits which Reason prescribes it. Now exciting this passion by Plays, we do not imprint at the same time the love of that which governs it. The Beholders receive only the impression of the passion, and little or none of the moderation of it. The Author stops where he pleases this Passion represented by a Stroke of his Pen; but he doth not stop it so in those in whom he excites it. The representation of a legitimate Love, and of that which is not so, causes almost the same effect, and excites only the same motion which acts afterwards differently, according to the different dispositions which it meets with; and often also the Representation of a

private passion, with this vail of honour is most dangerous, because the Mind looks upon it with less precaution, as it is received there with less horror, and because the Heart is carried thereunto with less resistance.

6. That which renders Plays more dangerous, is because they disperse all the remedies, which are able to hinder the bad impression they make. The Heart is softened by the pleasure of them. The Mind thereby is altogether busied with outward objects, and absolutely besotted with the follies which are there represented, and consequently not in a condition of Christian vigilance, necessary to resist temptations, and like a Reed bent by all sorts of winds. There is great likelihood that no body hath ever thought of preparing themselves against them by Prayer, seeing that the Spirit of God would much rather incline to avoid this dangerous sort of Divertisement, than to beseech his Grace to be preserved from the corruption, which there it met withall. If then Persons who live in solitude, and in retirement from the World, do yet find great difficulty in a Christian Life, even in Monasteries. If they receive tryals
of

of worldly Commerce at the same time, when 'tis Charity and necessity that engages them therein, and that they keep themselves upon their guards as much as they can, that they may resist: What may be the wounds, and downfall of those, who leading a life absolutely sensual, expose themselves to temptations, which the strongest are not able to undergo? Ought it not to be said of them, comparing them with holy persons, what *Job* said of man, comparing him with the Angels. *Ecce qui serviunt ei non sunt stabiles, & in Angelis suis reperit pravitatem; quanto magis qui habitant domus luteas consumentur a Tinea?* If these Spirits which serve God as Ministers are not stable, and if he find fault in the Angels themselves, by how much more reason will Souls enclosed in Bodies, as in houses of clay, be subject to corruption and sin? Or what *Esaias* said, *Super humum populi mei Spinae & vepres ascendent; quanto magis super omnem Domum gaudii Civitatis exultantia?* If the ground of my people, saith our Lord, is covered with Briars and Thorns, that is, if the Souls which sigh after their Celestial Country, are sometimes peirced by the Stings of Sin, what disorders will not those

those run into who live in Pleasures, and whose hearts are filled with all the foolish joys of this World? *Quanto magis super omnem domum gaudii Civitatis exultantis?*

7. We ought to consider that Plays are tentations taught with gayety, which seperates and takes away Gods grace from us, and inclines him more to forsake and abandon us to our own proper corruption, then those whereinto we fall unawares. It is rashness, Pride, and Impiety to think that we are capable to resist, without Grace, the tentations we meet with in plays; and it is a presumption and a folly to believe that God will always deliver us from danger by his Grace, when we expose our selves voluntarily, and without necessity.

8. We deceive our selves mightily in thinking that Plays make no ill Impressions upon us, because we perceive not that they excite in us any ill desires. There are many steps before we come to an entire corruption of mind and heart; and 'tis always much harm to the Soul to destroy the Rampiers which save it from tentations. 'Tis to wrong her much to accustome her to behold these sorts of Objects without dread, and with

a kind of Complacency, and to possess her that 'tis a pleasure to love and to be loved. The aversion which she had for them served her as Fortresses which stop the passage to the Devil, and when they are ruined by Plays, he enters afterwards easily. There is often a long time that we begin to fall before we chance to be aware of it. The misfortunes of the Soul are long and tedious; they have preparations and Progresses, and it happens often that we lye under these temptations, only because we have weakned our selves in occasions of small importance.

9. Let those then (who perceive not that Plays and Romances excite in their minds these Passions which are ordinarily apprehended) not think themselves, for all that, safe, and let them imagine that these Lectures and these Sights have done them no harm. The Word of God which is the Seed of life, and the word of the Devil which is the Seed of death have this common, That they remain often a long time hidden in the heart without producing any sensible effect. God oftentimes joyns the Salvation of certain persons to words of Truth which he hath sown in their Soul.

Soul twenty years before, and which he awakens when he pleaseth, to make them produce the fruits of life. And the devil contents himself likewise sometimes to replenish the memory with these Images, without going further, or forming yet any sensible temptation. But at length, after a long time he enlivens them, even without our so much as remembering how they are crept in, to the end that they may produce the fruits of Death, *ut fructificent Morti*, which is the only mark he proposeth in all that he hath done in respect of men. We may say then to those, who boast that Plays and Romances provoke not in them the least evil thought, that they expect a little, that the Devil will know when to take his time, and will be sure to find a favourable occasion. Possibly engaging them to him by other ties, he neglects none to make use of those which are most visible; but if he hath need of them to destroy them, he will not be wanting to employ them.

10. If it should be true, that Playes could produce no bad effects upon the minds of certain persons, they should not therefore take them for innocent recreations, nor believe that they are not guilty

guilty in assisting at them. A Play is not acted for one single person. 'Tis a shew which is exposed to all sorts of humors, the most part whereof are weak and feeble, and to whom consequently it is very dangerous. 'Tis their fault, will you say, to be present in this condition; It is true, but 'tis your fault likewise, seeing that you make them contribute to the making them look upon Plays as an indifferent thing. The more you are orderly in your other actions, the more they are bold to imitate you in that. Why, say they, Shall we scruple going to Plays, seeing that virtuous people go thereunto? You participate then of their Sin; and if Plays hurt you not of themselves, you are prejudiced by those damages which others receive by your example; and thus you are the most blameable of all. Worldly persons of whom we take no example, are scarcely faulty but by their proper sins. But those who will pass for virtuous, and who practise indeed some good Works, are faulty by their proper sins, and by those of others; and loose not only the merit of their good works, but they poison them in some sort, in making them serve to engage others in sin.

11. God asketh of men, properly speaking, only their love ; but he demands it absolutely. He will have no division of it. And as he is their Sovereign Good, he Wills that they fix themselves no where else, nor that they set their minds upon any creature, because no Creature is their end. The fulness of Charity which we ow to God, saith *St. Austine*, permits not that we let any Current run out. *Nullum rivum duci extra patitur.* Therefore what goodness soever can be imagined in the love of a mortal Creature, this Love is always vicious and illegitimate, when springing from any other than the love of God; and it cannot spring from thence, when 'tis a love of passion, and self-interest; which makes us find our joy and pleasure in this Creature. A Christian who knows what he owes to God, ought not to suffer any alteration in his heart, nor any fixedness of this sort without condemning it; without being sorry for it; and without beseeching God to be delivered from it, and he ought to have an extream horror that he himself should be the object of this passion, and this inclination in any others, and thus in some sort their Idol; seeing that Love is.

is a worship which is only due to God, as God can be only honoured by Love. *Nec colitur nisi amando.* 'Tis this which shews that there is a great number of Women, who believing themselves innocent, as having indeed some horror of gross vices, are yet nevertheless criminal before God, because they are very glad to hold in mens hearts a place which belongs only to God. These Women take pleasure in being the object of their passion: They are glad that people fix themselves to them, that they look upon them with sentiments, not only of esteem, but of kindness, and they suffer without trouble, that they witness it to them by this prophane Language, which is called cajolling. Therefore what care soever we may take to separate Playes and Romances from these images of shameful disorders, we shall never take away the danger, because we see always therein a lively representation of this passionate tye of Men towards Women, which cannot be innocent, and which will never be hindred so long as Women are delighted with the pleasure of being loved and adored by Men, which is no less dangerous, nor less contagious for them, than the Images of disorder, which,

which are both visible and criminal.

12. Plays and Romances do not only stir up the passions, but they teach also the language of Passions; that is to say, the art of expressing it, and making it appear agreeable and ingenious, which is no small evil. There are many who stuff them with bad designs, because they want address to explicate themselves. And it often happens, that some persons without being touched with passion, and desiring simply to shew their wit, find themselves afterward insensibly engaged in passions, which they only counterfeited at the beginning,

13. The pleasure of Plays is a hurtful Pleasure, because ordinarily it comes from a corrupt bottom, which is stirr'd up in us, by things we see therein. And to be convinced thereof, we need but consider, that when we have a great horror for an action we take no pleasure in seeing it represented, and 'tis that which obliges Poets to hide from the sight of the beholders, all that may cause this horror in them. When we feel not the same aversion for foolish Loves, and other disorders represented in Plays, and that we take delight in beholding them, 'Tis a Token that we hate them
not.

not, and that they excite in us, I know not what inclinations to vice, which spring from the corruption of the heart : If we had the Idea of Vice in its natural deformity, we should not be able to suffer the Image of it ; therefore one of the greatest Poets of this age observes, that one of his best pieces hath not pleased upon the Stage ; because it struck the minds of the spectator with the horrible Idea of a prostitution, whereunto a Holy Woman had been condemned. But what he drew from thence to justify his Play, *viz.* That the Theater is now so chaste, that men cannot suffer dishonest objects, is what manifestly condemn'd it. For we may learn by this example, that men approve in some manner all that is suffered, and all that men see with pleasure upon the Theatre, seeing that they cannot suffer what men have a horror for. And consequently, there being so many corruptions, and vicious passions in Plays, the most innocent, 'tis observable, that men hate not these disorders when they take delight to see them acted.

14. 'Tis yet a great abuse, and which deceives very many, to consider no other bad effects in these representations, but that

that of giving contrary thoughts to purity, and believing thus, that they hurt us not when they do it not in this manner; as if there were no other vices but that one; and that we were not susceptible of them. Nevertheless, if we consider Plays made by those who have been the most affected to this honesty, we shall find they have only forborn to represent some objects which are entirely dishonest, to paint others as criminal, and which are not less infective. All their Works are nothing but lively representatives of passions of Pride, Ambition, of Jealousie, and Vengeance, and chiefly of this Romantick virtue, which is indeed, nothing but a furious love of ones self. The more it colours these vices with the Image of greatness and generosity, the more it renders them dangerous and capable of re-entring the best Souls, and the imitation of these passions does not please us; but because the bottom of our corruption doth excite at the same time, a motion altogether like, which transforms us in some manner, and makes us embrace the passion which is represented to us.

15. It is so true, that Plays are almost always a representation of vicious passions, that the most part of Christian virtues are incapable of appearing upon the Stage. Silence, Patience, Moderation, Wisdom, Poverty, Repentance are no Virtues, the representation of which can divert the Spectators; and above all, we never hear Humility spoken of, nor the bearing of Injuries. It would be strange to see a modest and silent Religious person represented. There must be something of great and renown'd according to men, or at least something of lively and animated, which is not met withal in Christian Gravity and Wisdom, and therefore those who have been desirous to introduce Holy Men and Women upon the Stage, have been forced to make them appear proud, and to make them utter discourses more proper for the antient Roman Heroes, than for Saints and Martyrs. Their Devotion upon the Stage, ought also to be always a little extraordinary.

16. Common Affections are not proper to give the pleasure which is sought for in Plays; and there would be nothing more cold than Christian Marriage freed from passion on every side.

There

There must always be some transport, that jealousy may enter ; that the consent of Parents may be found contrary, and that Intrigues may be made use of, to make their designs Proper. Thus the way is laid open to those who shall be possessed with the same passion, that they may make use of the same means, to arrive at the same end.

17. The drift of Plays engage Poets to represent nothing but vicious passions. Because the end they propose to themselves is to please the Spectators, which they cannot do, but by putting into the mouths of the Actors, words and sentiments conform to those whom they make to speak, or to whom they speak. Now they hardly represent any but wicked persons, and they speak only before worldly people, whose hearts and minds are vitiated by disordered Passions, and wicked Maxims.

18. Worldly people the ordinary spectators of Plays have three principle inclinations They are full of Concupiscence, full of Pride, and full of esteem for human Generosity, which is nothing but a disguised Pride. Thus Poets, to please them by adapting themselves to these inclinations, are obliged to act in
such

such sort, that their works may roul
always upon these three passions, and
fill them also with love, sentiments of
Pride, and Maxims of human Honour.
'Tis this which causes that nothing is
more pernicious then poetick and Ro-
mantick Morality; because 'tis nothing
but a Collection of false opinions, which
spring from these three Mountains, and
which are only agreeable, as flattering
the depraved inclinations of the Read-
ers and Spectators.

'Tis by the same corruptness of mind
that men, without trouble, hear horri-
ble opinions of a person who would
fight a Duel with his friend, because the
world believed he was the Author of
a business, whereof he thought he was
innocent.

Men listen with delight to the words
of a Father to his Son, to whom he gave
charge to revenge him.

And yet, considering these sentiments
according to reason, there is nothing
more detestable. But men think that
'tis permitted to Poets to propose the
most damnable Maxims, provided they
be conformable to the Character of
their Personages.

19. 'Tis not imaginable that these
wicked

wicked Maxims which plays are stuffed with should do no hurt, because men go not to them to instruct their judgments, but to divert themselves: For they do not cease to engraft their Impressions without mens being aware of them, and a Gentleman will perceive an affront more lively, and will be more easily inclin'd to revenge himself by the Criminal way, which is very frequent in most parts, when he shall have heard and seen how a light affront is resented in a Play upon the Principle of a false *Idea* of Honour.

The reason whereof is, that Passions excite him, not only by objects, but also by false opinions wherewith the mind is prepossessed. The opinion that Chimerical Honour is so great a Good that it must be maintained with the loss of life it self, is that which hath produced, for so long time, the brutish rage of the Gentry of many parts. If we never spoke of those who fight Duels, but as mad and ridiculous people, as indeed they are, if we never represented this Fantome of Honour, which they make their Idol, but as a Chimera and Folly; if we had a care never to form Images of Revenge, but as base actions,
and

and full of Cowardise, the motives which the Person offended would feel, would be infinitely more dull. But that which renders them more lively, is the false Impression that there is of Cowardise to suffer an Injury. Now it cannot be denied but Plays which are stuffed with these bad Maxims, contribute much to fortifie this Impression, because the mind being transported with them, and as it were besides it self, instead of checking these sentiments, gives way thereunto without resisting, and placeth its pleasure in feeling the motions they inspire, which disposes it to produce the same or the like upon occasion.

10. Yet that which renders the Image of the passions, which Plays propose to us, more dangerous, is that the Poets, to make them agreeable, are obliged, not only to represent them in a very lively manner, but also to divest them of what looks more horrible, and to paint them out in such a sort by the nimbleness of their wit, that instead of gaining the hatred and the aversion of Beholders, they may on the contrary get their affection. So that a Passion which only causes horrors, if it were presented in its natural dress, becomes lovely

lovely by the ingenious manner by which it is expressed.

If we divest the Image of the Passion of Anger of all the Paint the Poet bestows on it, and that we consider it by reason, we can imagin nothing more detestable then the fury of an incensed person, whom a foolish Passion causeth to violate all the Laws of Nature. Nevertheless this same disposition of mind so criminal in it self hath nothing that is horrible, being dressed up in these Ornaments, and the Spectators are more inclined to love this Fury then to hate it. We have made use of these instances on purpose, because they are less dangerous to be reported. But it is true that the Poets practice this Artifice of disguising Vices into subjects much more hurtful then that. And if we consider almost all Plays and all Romances, we shall hardly find therein any thing but vicious Passions beautified and set forth with a certain Paint which makes them agreeable to worldly people. Now if it be not permitted to love Vices, may one take delight in things which tend to render them amiable?

21. A Christian having renounced the World, his Pleasures, and his Pumps, cannot

cannot seek after pleasure as pleasure, nor divertisement for divertisement sake. He must, that he may be able to use them without sinning, act in some manner, that one may say truly of him, that he useth them with the moderation of one who doth use them, and not with the passion of one who loves them, *Uten in modestia, non amantis affectu*. Now as the sole use of recreation is to renew the force of the mind and body, when tired with labours; so it is evident, that 'tis not permitted to divert ones self over much, but as it is in eating.

'Tis easie to conclude from thence, that 'tis not a Christian life, but a Pagan and brutal life, to employ the greatest part of our time in recreation, seeing that 'tis not permitted for ones self, but only to render the soul more capable of labour. For if no body doubt but that 'tis a dangerous life for a man that should do nothing but eat, and sit at Table from morning till night, which the Prophet condemns in these words, *Va va qui Consurgitis mane ad ebrietatem sectandam, & potandum usque ad vesperam*.

'Tis not hard to see that it is not less abusing the life which God hath given us to serve him, to spend it totally in that

M

which

which is called Divertisement; seeing that the word it self tels us, that we ought to seek it but to divert our selves, and withdraw us from thoughts, and laborious occupations, which cause in the Soul a kind of weariness, which we have need to repair.

This is sufficient to condemn the most part of those who go to Plays; For it is clear, that they go not thither to ease the mind of serious occupations, being that these people, and particularly worldly Women, hardly ever employ or busy themselves seriously. Their Life is nothing but a vicissitude of divertisements, which they pass away in Visits, in Game, in going to Balls and Masques; in Walking, in Feasting and in Plays. What if they be vexed, as they often are, 'tis because they have too much divertisement, and too little serious employments? Their vexation is a dislike of plenty and satiety, like to that of those who have eaten too much, and it ought to be cured by abstinence, and not by the alteration and change of pleasures. They ought to divert themselves in being busy, for that laziness and idleness, are the chief cause of their vexation.

22. From hence it follows, that all those who have no need of divertisement, that is to say, the most part of those who go to Plays, cannot do it without sinning; tho there should be no other reason to believe them forbidden. But it follows not, that those who have truly need to recreate the mind, can go thither without sin, because Plays cannot pass for a Divertisement, not being able to work the effect, which is allowed to be sought therein. For a Christian can only seek a simple refreshment of mind, which may render him more capacitated to act Christian-like, and according to Christian policy. Now Plays are so far from being assistant thereto, that there is nothing makes the Soul worse disposed, not only to the principal Christian occupations, as Prayer, but to Actions themselves the most common, when one would do them with a Christian mind; that is to say, recollected, and attentive to God, which one ought to endeavour, as much as he can to conserve in the outward actions, Thus as the need we have to eat, allows, not that it is permitted us to eat meats serving only to weaken the body; likewise the need of diverting our

21

selves cannot excuse those who search after such Divertisements, as only render their mind less proper to act Christian-like.

23. Playes and Romances render not only the mind ill inclined to all actions of Religion, and Piety, but make it have a dislike in some manner of all serious and common actions. As there is nothing represented in them but Courtships, and extraordinary passages, and the discourses of those who speak on the Stages, are far enough removed from those which are used in common; so men take therein insensibly an inclination altogether Romantick; they are stuffed with Princes and Princesses; and chiefly the Women taking pleasure in the respects which is given to those of their Sex; the Image and practice of which, they see in the several Divertisements, wherein the young Gallants pay to them what they have learnt in Romances, and treat them like Nymphs and Goddesses, imprints in such a manner this sort of life in the fancy, that the little affairs of their Huswifery becomes unsupportable to them, and when they return into their Houses, with this evaporated Spirit, and quite fill'd with these follies, they

they find all therein disagreeable; and above all, their Husbands, who being busied about their affairs, are not always in the humour to render them those ridiculous complacencies, which are given to Women in Plays and Romances.

24. The necessity which we have to repair the decay of our bodies by nourishment cannot serve as an excuse for eating voluntary meats, which might imprint a venemous quality, which might trouble the humors, and which might cause therein intemperance, because this kind of nutriment would be contrary to the end, or intent of eating, which is to conserve the life of the body. Thus the need we have sometimes of refreshing our selves, cannot excuse them who esteem Plays a divertisement; seeing that they imprint, as hath already been said, bad qualitys in the mind, that they excite passions, and disorder the Soul.

25. The necessity men have to divert themselves, is much less than they think, and consists more in imagination, or in custom, than in real necessity. Those who are busied in outward labours, need only a simple cessation from their labour. Those who are employ'd in affairs troublesome to the mind, and not

laborious for the body, have need to withdraw themselves from the dissipation which springs naturally from these sorts of employs, and not to disperse themselves yet more by divertisements which bind the mind strongly. 'Tis an absurdity to think, that there is need to spend three hours at a Play, to stuff the mind with fooleries. Men in these days have not their minds made otherwise, than those in the time of *St. Lewis*, who employed his time well when he banished Plays out of his Kingdom. Those who feel in them this need, ought to consider it, not as natural inability, but as a vice gotten by custom, which must be cured by employing themselves seriously. A man who hath laboured sore, is satisfied when he leaves working, and diverts himself in all that doth not busy him. Plays are only necessary for those who divert themselves always, and who endeavour to remedy the dislike, which naturally accompanies the continuation of pleasures. And as this necessity comes only from their evil disposition, which they are obliged to correct, it may be said, that 'tis needful for no man, but that 'tis dangerous to all the world.

26. But there is nothing that shews the danger of Plays better, and how much they are forbid to Christians, than the opposition they have with the principal dispositions in which Christians ought to establish themselves, and to which they ought to tend, altho as yet they may be separated through weakness from their virtue. The First, is continual Prayer, whereof the Apostle gives an expresse Command in these words; *Sine Intermissione orate. Pray without Intermission*; and Jesus Christ by these, *Vigilate & orate ne Intretis in temptationem. Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation.* Because temptation being in some sort continual Prayer, the remedy ought to be so likewise. 'Tis true, that this continuation and perseverance in Prayer, cannot consist in a perpetual attention of the mind to God, and that 'tis sufficient that it remain always in a simple desire that God know it: but 'tis certain, that this desire is easily extinguished, if care be not had to nourish it by actual Prayers, and by meditating upon Divine things.

Therefore Christians not being able to lead their whole lives in the act of Prayer, are at least, obliged to renew

it from time to time before God : and as it is by these actual Prayers that they entertain that which ought to be always at the bottom of their heart; they ought with great care avoid all that may render these Prayers unworthy of being presented before the Divine Majesty, which not only obliges them to fly distractions which happen to them in Prayer, but much more the sources of distractions, which filling the Soul with foolish thoughts, renders it incapable of applying it self to God.

This is sufficient to oblige those who are careful of their Salvation, to fly Plays and Romances, because there is nothing in the world which destroys the Soul more, which renders it more incapable of applying it self to God, or which fills it more with vain fancies. They are strange Prayers which are made coming from these Sights, or from these lectures, having the head filled with all the fooleries which they saw there. Man is not able to procure to himself the Spirit of Prayer, nor this Holy zeal which excites him when God pleaseth, by meditation : *Et in meditatione mea exardescit ignis* ; but the least that can be done, is to put no obstacle by doing

doing voluntarily, what is directly opposite to this Spirit.

27. God easily pardons the distractions which spring from the frailty of nature; but he does not so with those which are voluntary in their sources, such are those which Plays produce; therefore there is reason to fear, that all the Prayers of them who go to Plays, being full of these kind of distractions, are more capable to irritate God, than to appease him, and that they are of the number of those which the Prophet speaks of. *Et oratio ejus fiat in peccatum: Let his Prayer be imputed to sin.* Now if their Prayers which ought to invite the Spirit of God over all the body of their Works, are themselves defiled, what ought men to judge of the rest of their actions? *Silumen quod in te est, tenebræ sunt, ipsæ tenebræ quanta erunt?*

28. One of these principal parts of Piety, and one of the chief means to conserve it, is to love the word of God, and to place our Consolation therein. 'Tis by the sentiment of sweetness which the Prophet had tasted in this spiritual Nurtriment, that he said to God, *Inventi sunt sermones tui & Comedi eos, & factum est*

est verbum tuum in gaudium & in letitiam Cordis mei. I have found thy words, and I have fed my self with them, and they have fill'd my heart with joy and delight. 'Tis this

Consolation so Divine which entertains our hopes according to St. Paul, and which maintains us in the crosses of this life. Now experience may make known to all the world, that nothing doth destroy this spiritual Joy, that men resent in the reading the word of God, more than worldly and sensual joys, and principally those of Plays. These two joys are absolutely incompatible; Those who please themselves with Plays, are not so with Truth; and those who take pleasure in Truth, have nothing of satisfaction in those sorts of pleasures. Therefore the same Prophet to whom God hath given this spiritual tast, for his Word witnesseth presently after, that he could not suffer assemblies of Games, and Divertisements; and that he put all his Glory and Joy, to consider the wonderfulness of Gods handy-work: *Non sedi cum concilio ludentium, & gloriolus sum à facie manus tue.* And the Holy King David, who had also tasted the sweetness of the Divine Law, doth witness likewise the contempt it made him conceive

conceive of all vain discourses of worldly men; *Narraverunt mihi Iniqui fabulationes, sed non lex tua.* 'Tis the sentiment which the Holy Ghost inspires into all those to whom he gives a love for his Holy word. All those Diver-
tisements which are so agreeable to those who love the world, are to them an unsavory meat, which they cannot eat, because they see nothing therein but emptiness, naughtiness, vanity, and foolishness, and find therein a want of the salt of Truth and Wisdom; which causeth them to say with *Job*, that they cannot taste it. *An poterit Comedi Insulsum, quod non est sale Conditum? Ubi poterit he could eat of this meat, which was not seasoned with Salt?*

But on the contrary, if the Soul addict it self to these false pleasures, she presently looses the pleasure of Spiritual ones, and finds only the word of God unfavoury. These are those sower Grapes, whereof the Prophet speaks, which set the Childrens Teeth on edge. *Omnis homo qui Comedit uvam acerbam, obstupescunt dentes ejus:* That is to say, according to the explication of *St. Gregory*, That when men feed of the vain joys of the World, the spiritual senses become
incapable

incapable of tasting and understanding Heavenly things. *Qui presentis mundi delectatione pascitur, Interni ejus sensus ligantur, ut jam spiritualia mandere & intelligere non valeant.* Now amongst the Delights which extinguish the love of Gods word, It may be said that Plays and Romances are of the first magnitude; because there is nothing more opposite to Truth, and the Spirit of God, as St. Bernard saith, being a Spirit of Truth cannot take part with the vanity of this World. *Sed nec erit ei unquam pars cum mundi vanitate, cum veritatis sit spiritus.*

29. God imputes not to us the coldness which comes from the subtraction of his Lights, or simply from the heaviness of the body; but doubtless, he imputes to us those which by our neglect we have contributed unto. He wills that we esteem nothing so much, as the precious gift he hath made us of his Love; and that we be careful to embrace it in giving it nourishment. 'Tis the Command which he hath given to all Christians, in the persons of the Priests of the antient Law, to whom he orders to maintain always the fire upon the Altar, and to be careful to add every day in the morning wood to it. *Ignis in Altari*

tari semper ardebit, quem nutrit sacerdos, subjiciens mane ligna per singulos dies. This Altar is the heart of Man, and every Christian is the Priest, who ought to have a care to nourish upon the Altar of his heart, the fire of Charity, by putting thereto every day some wood, that is to say, in entertaining it, by meditating of Holy things, and by exercises of Piety. Now if those who go to Plays, have yet any sense of Piety, they must necessarily grant, that they absolutely extinguish and slay Devotion. And thus they ought not to question, but God will judge them culpable; for having made so little account of his Love, that instead of nourishing, and of endeavouring to augment it, they have not feared to extinguish it by their vain and foolish divertisements; and that he will impute to them as a great sin this coldness, or the loss of their Charity. For if the dissipation of worldly Goods, and of terrestrial Gold by Play, and by Excess, be not a small sin; what ought men to think of the dissipation of the Goods of Grace, and of this inflamed Gold the Scripture speaks of, which we ought to buy at the loss of all the Goods, and all the pleasures of this life?

30. The Fathers blame as a dangerous rashness, the conduct of those who being not as yet grounded in the love of God, employ themselves with too much eagerness in outward good Works, under pretence of Charity; because it is difficult that the mind be not much dissipated in these exercises: *In terrenis quippe actibus*, saith St. Gregory, *valde frigescit animus, si necdum fuerit per Intima dona solidatus*. If the Soul be not fortified in the inward life by Grace, she becomes very cold, in terrestrial, and worldly employments. What judgment would he have made then of those, who being yet weaker, do nevertheless make no difficulty of going to Plays, which dissipate the mind more than the greatest employments, and can be excused neither by Charity nor by Zeal, being that men seek therein only pleasure.

31. No man doubtless would approve that a *Carthusian* should go to Plays, because all the world sees the great disproportion of this divertisement with the Holy Life he professeth. But we are not struck, that many Christians make little or no difficulty of going thither, because we know not the Holyness to which they are obliged by the vow of their

their Baptism. We consider not, as *S. Paulinus* saith, that by the grace of this Sacrament they have been buried with *Jesus Christ*, that they have promised to embrace his Cross, to live no more for themselves nor the World; but that *Jesus Christ* may live in them. We consider that a Christian life ought not only to be an imitation, but a continuation of the life of *Jesus Christ*; since that 'tis his Spirit which ought to act in them, and by them, by imprinting in their hearts the same sentiments which it hath in that of *Jesus Christ*. If we did observe a Christian life by this means, we should soon know how much Plays are opposite thereunto, and there would need no reasons to convince those who would be perswaded of the Capital Truths of our Religion, as there needs none to convince a *Carthusian*, instructed in his Order, that these diversions so prophane are forbidden him.

32. All our actions are due to *Jesus Christ*, not only as to our God, but as to him who hath redeemed us at the price of his dearest Blood, to oblige us to glorify him in all our works, as *St. Paul* saith. All our actions must relate to his Glory, and must witness, that
we

we will imitate Jesus Christ crucified; that we love what he hath loved, and hate what he hath hated. And as he is the beginning of all good Works, and that the Grace by which we do them, is the fruit of the Cross; we ought to thank him for all those, which his Spirit hath made us do. Lastly, we ought to say truly, that we do them for him, and by his Love. Now would it not be to scoff at God and Man, to say that we go to Plays for the love of Jesus Christ? should we dare to offer him this action, and tell him, Lord, 'tis in obedience to thee that I will go to Plays; it will be thy Spirit which will guide me thither; it will be thee who shall be the principal of this action; 'tis by the Cross that thou hast made me deserve it? Is there any one so blind or stubborn, who can suffer without horror, the impiety of this Language? and even those who labour the most to justify Plays, have they ever dared to offer this action to God? Have they ever thought to give thanks to God for having assisted thereunto? Is not this an evident proof that their Consciences belye their false Lights; and that they themselves are convinced from the bottom of their hearts,

hearts, of the harm there is in Playes, although they endeavour to dissemble it by the weak reasons, which their wits furnish them with? For every action which we should not dare to offer to God, every action, whereof Jesus Christ is not the principal; every action which we cannot do to obey him; every action which cannot be the fruit and effect of his Cross; In Fine, every action which we dare not not thank him for, may not be good, nor permitted a Christian.

33. If a Christian consider himself as a sinner, he ought to acknowledge that there is nothing more contrary to that state which obliges him to Penance, Tears, and to avoid unprofitable pleasures, than the hunting after such vain and foolish recreations, and so dangerous as Plays. If he consider himself as a Child of God, as a member of Jesus Christ, illuminated by his Truth, enriched by his Graces, nourished with his Body, Heir of his Kingdom; he ought to judge that there is nothing more unworthy so high a quality, as the taking delight in these foolish pleasures of the Children of the World.

34. The Soul cannot conserve a true Piety, without the assistance of a wholesome fear, which she conceives at the sight of dangers, wherewith she is environed. She cannot be ignorant of the power and malice of her enemies, who go round seeking how to devour her, as the Scripture speaks. She knows, as *St. Paulinus* saith, that all corporal creatures, which draw our Hearts by the means of our Eyes, are so many Nets, which the Devil makes use of to catch us in; so many Swords wherewith he endeavours to run us to the Heart. She knows that she marches in the midst of her enemies, and of a thousand snares; and that she walks there without Light, or Strength; because she sees only darkness in her understanding, only weakness in her Will, and rebellion in her Sences. The experience of so many Souls which loose themselves by their sight, and the general disorder which reigns every where, makes her know that there is nothing so rare as Christian virtue; nothing so easy as to loose ones self; nothing so difficult as to be saved. How then can she joyn with so just a fear of terrible evils, which threaten her, the vain rejoycing of the world,

and

and feed her mind with Chimeras, which Plays stuff it with all? Is it not visible that as the natural effects of Plays are to stifle this so wholsom fear? also the effect of this fear, ought to be to stifle the desire of unprofitable, and prophane recreations, and to make her conclude, that she hath many other things to think of in this world, than going to Plays: that the time God bestows on her, is too precious to be lost unfortunately in these vain amusements; so that when she gives her self over thereunto, it must needs be, that she is blind, that she hath lost the remembrance of her dangers, and that she hath stifled in this manner, that disposition, by which the Holy Spirit enters into the heart, and is entertained there whilst it remains therein.

35. One of the first effects of the light of Grace, is to discover to the Soul, the emptiness, the meanness, and the instability of all worldly things, which slide and vanish away like fancies, and to make it see at the same time, the grandeur and solidity of Eternal Goods. And this disposition produceth of it self a peculiar aversion for Plays, because it perceives therein

in an emptiness and meanness altogether peculiar. For if all temporal things be nothing but Figures, and Shadows, in what rank ought Plays to be put, which are only the Shadows of Shadows, seeing that they are nothing but the vain Images of temporal things, and oftentimes false things also?

36. Sin hath open'd the eyes, to make men see with pleasure the vanities of this world: and Grace in opening the Eyes of the Soul for the things of God, shuts them to worldly things, through a blindness, much more fortunate than that miserable sight which sin hath procured us. 'Tis this wholesome blindness, saith *St. Paulinus* which the Prophet begg'd of God; when he said, *Hinder my eyes from seeing vanity.* And which our Lord prefers before the clear seeing eyes of the Jews, when he told them, *Si ceci essetis non haberetis peccatum.* If yewere blind, ye should have no sin.

If then we are obliged in quality of Christians, to beg of God, that he will take away our Eyes from all worldly follies, of which, Plays are as it were a Compendium, and imprint in us a hatred, and an aversion for them
in

in the Heart; How can we think that we shall be able to satisfy our eyes with these vain sights, and to place our Satisfaction and Content, in [what ought to be the object of our aversion and horror.

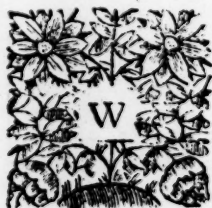
The



The Fifth Treatise.

Of Reports.

1.



E scarcely see any one who does not complain of the Reports which are made of him, and who pretends not that others violate, in regard of him the Rules of Honesty and Justice. And as these sorts of complaints have not only a place in the world, but amongst persons of Piety and in Societies, the most orderly. It seems, that we have right to conclude from thence, that the Rules by which we ought to judge of the equity and necessity of Reports, are not known well enough. In the mean time we may say, that there is hardly any thing more important

important, than to clear them, seeing that indiscreet reports are the most common cause of troubles and divisions, which happen not only in particular Friendships, but also in Societies, and even in whole Kingdoms, and that 'tis difficult that we do not commit many Faults if we be not well instructed what ought to be done to avoid them.

2. What is strange, is that every man complaining of others upon this point, no man thinks he gives cause to others to complain of him. He saw enough thereof, who said of others, That they are people who Conster all things wrong, who report them so, who wast and poyson the most innocent and the most harmless Discourses, who have neither Fidelity nor Secrecy: But we see not therein who attribute these faults to themselves, and who believe they want neither Sincerity nor Honesty. Finally each would observe this Law willingly, that it might be permitted him to tell all that he would of other mens Discourses, and that it might not be allowed any one to report any thing of his.

But as all the World pretending to this Priviledge, no man obtains it indeed,
it

it must make account that all things will go always almost alike, and that the World will always follow its fancies and passions, that there will always be found people who will suffer themselves to report what they shall thing fit, and thus they need only to be mindful to rule themselves, that they may observe in this point, in respect of others, what Honesty, Charity, and Justice demands of us.

3. 'Tis almost the sole real Interest which we may have therein. For provided that we our selves commit not Faults, the indiscretion and wickedness of others can hardly hurt us. They are evil for them, and sometimes for those who give ear to them and believe them, but not for those whom these reports are made of, if they bear them as they ought. God oftentimes makes use of them to procure them considerable Benefits, and thereby to make them prosper by the designs of his Mercy upon them. Thus we have nothing to do but to stand upon our Guard against our selves, and we shall be shelter'd from all the rest.

4. We are so much more obliged thereunto, because unless we be very attentive

tentive to our selves, it is very hard to avoid committing these kind of faults; because direction hath no certain and precise Rules, and because we cannot establish, upon this point, general Maxims. It is not true, that we cannot at some time report what we have heard. It is not true, that 'tis never permitted to tell what may be displeasing to those who have spoken it. It is not true, that it may be allowed to relate all that may be gainsaid without displeasing them. And finally, excepting the Maxim which commands that we relate nothing but Truth, all the rest are not universal Truths, and they must be restrain'd by divers Conditions to make them Just.

5. But 'tis not unprofitable nevertheless to know these Rules, and to have them present, because it behoves us to stick to them, unless we clearly see that we are in the case of exception. Particular reasons to observe the general Laws of secrecy are needless, but there must be very clear and very pressing ones to dispense with them. So that when the least doubt is started we must adhere to the Rule, and not to the Exception. This is the first Maxim which

N

ought

ought to be printed in the mind upon this Subject; and will suffice also to mark out to us our Duty in the most part of occurrences. For we are hardly wanting to secrecy, but through a fickleness which makes us pass by all doubts and reasonable scruples, which we perceive formed of our understandings.

6. The general Foundation of the tie which we commonly have to secrecy in regard of what men say to us in the way of discourse is, that God having had in consideration in all his Laws the linking men together, and making them live in a well grounded Society, all that destroys this Society ought to be esteemed as wicked and pernicious. Now it is manifest that 'twould be impossible that this Society should subsist, if men were in a continual defiance of one another, if they looked upon one another as Enemies, and if they thought they might not communicate their intentions to whomsoever it were, with security. 'Tis a Torment the Common people cannot endure, as being always upon the reserve to say nothing that may be ill taken. This inconveniency cannot absolutely be avoided; because minds being different, what one

one man thinks good, another oftentimes takes it in the contrary sense. There are elsewhere a thousand things which have nothing of bad, being said in particular, and which we cannot nevertheless tell again without imprudence and danger; so that if those to whom we speak, think that they have reason to relate all that men tell them, there is almost no entertainment from whence we ought not to fear bad effects.

7. Also let us not presume to speak to people with confidence, but in supposing them in another disposition, and imagining that they have some fidelity and secrecy, and as every one may judge what they expect and what they reckon upon that, It may be said that we engage our selves therein by giving ear to what others say to us that they were promised Secrecy, and thus we are obliged to be upon our guard, not only through consideration of common profit, but by vertue of this Covenant and this secret Promise. If we had not a design to oblige them thereby, that should be declared, and we ought to act in such sort that they may have no reason to expect it; because it is reasonable that those who will not observe the common

Laws which are received amongst men, do at least give notice to others of their resolution, that we may not take them for that which indeed they are not.

8. 'Tis for this reason that we cannot blame the Rule and Government observed in Monasteries, which is to relate all to the Superior they hear said ill of those who live there. For persons chosen and tryed may well renounce all the entertainments of Confidence, and the rule which obliges to these relations being known by all, each one is sufficiently advertised to say nothing but what he desires may be told again: After which those who run the hazard of it ought to complain of themselves, not of those who do nothing but what ought to be judged they should do. But as the same Law is not establish'd in the world, and that it would be also a fault to establish it therein, those who are wanting in what may lawfully be expected from them, do undoubtedly wrong Honesty and Justice, and 'tis enough to judge them guilty of infidelity, that they have not spoken to them with freedom, but upon consideration that they would not have abused it at all, but would have kept secret what could not be

be told again without injuring the Party who said it.

9. There are some who never miss, when they will that a thing be not told again, to require absolutely the secret. And this is not a bad Custome, because that applies more the imagination of those to whom we speak, and frees them from the trouble of distinguishing whether they could or could not relate what was told them, seeing that after the express promise there is no more to deliberate upon. But moreover as this prevention would be very troublesome in a long discourse, and that there are some who would be astonished that they should have so little trust in their discretion, it is likewise hard to practice it always, and there should be for that an application which many people are not capable of. It is requisit then that the natural secret supply the defect of an express engagement, there being no other difference betwixt natural obligation to a secret, and that which comes from an express promise; only in the last we leave it not to him we engage in the freedom of distinguishing whether he can or cannot relate what was told to him; whereas in the other we remit

it to the discretion of him whom we speak to, and imagine that he hath so much interest as not to tell what he shall conclude prejudicial to him from whom he learnt what he knows. But the obligation is alike in the one and in the other; and in one sense it may be said that a truly honest man ought to think himself so much more obliged to secrecy, by how less cautious he hath been with him, and hath more relied upon his discretion, and his fidelity.

10. 'Tis but considering the bottom of the heart to grant the justness of this Law. For who is he who would not that others should practice it to him? Who is it that would not be glad to find in them this Fidelity, and complain of those who want it? It follows then by the general rule of natural equity, That each man is obliged to practice this fidelity towards others. There needs not for this express Promises and Compacts; The fear of this natural Law is greater then that of all promises and Compacts; and it may be said even that this promise is found there, and that 'tis that is observed by all those ordinary Civilities which are rendred to people in the World. For if these Civili-
ties

ties be sincere as they ought to be, they signifie at least that we are not Enemies to those to whom we pay them, that we have no design of harming them, and that we are disposed to practice, in respect of them, the Obligations of Honesty and common Civility. Now the least respect we can pay them is not to abuse, to their prejudice, what they shall have told us.

11. The right of a Pawn hath always been sacred amongst men, and they have always esteemed it an Injustice to violate it without an excess Baseness and Perfidiousness. Nevertheless it is not needful that he who trusts a business of concern to another, take assurance for his faithfulness. He is engaged sufficiently to it in receiving it. Now what is it that man does, in a particular discourse, but render him whom he speaks to, depositor of his thoughts, which he trusts him withall? Let it be then, that he require expressly the secret, or that he do not, 'tis always the Pawn, which we ought to believe cannot be disposed, but according to the intentions of him who hath trusted it.

12. There are men enough who think themselves obliged to this Fidelity to-

wards their Friends, but there are very few who extend this obligation to persons either indifferent, or Enemies. Thus men think they are out of reproach, as to Reports, when they may say they have no Obligation to those whom they concern, nor any engagement to advise them. But these excuses come only from a base *Idea* we have of Charity. A true Christian is not only no mans Enemy because he loves all men, but he loves them all equally, according to St. *Augustine*, in wishing them all equally happiness. What though they shew more kindness to some then to others, 'tis because the outward effects of Friendship being limited, they owe them particularly to those to whom the Providence of God hath associated with him. 'Tis not then affection that he wants when he shews it not outwardly; 'tis this association. Now from the time that men enter into talk with some one by particular discourse, the Providence applies us to him in giving us the means to practice Charity in its proper place, and by consequence we are obliged to use him like a Friend, which at least includes the Obligation not to abuse his Confidence.

13. But must we extend the secret to those also who have violated it first by indiscreet Reports, and who shall have abused, through Malice and Imprudence, the confidence which we have testified to them? Do not they take away the right of requiring from others by this means, what they themselves have not observed? It seems at first, the first sentiment conducts us thither; but if examined more strictly, we shall find that it is rather a motive of indignation, than of Justice: because, what would friendship be, if each one thought himself in the right of making a Magazine of all that should slip from his friends to injure them, in case they happen to fail in their Duties? Also *St. Austin* observes equally amongst the qualities of a man of worth, never to discover what hath been put in trust to him, and never to do any thing that he fears may be discovered. *Aliena peccata sibi Commissa Aug. non produnt, quæ prodi timeant, ipsi Ep. 15. nulla Committant.* We ought not therefore to suffer our Duty to depend upon anothers, nor commit Infidelities, because another does so. If a slight and unfaithful friend deserve not that we manage him by his present state and condition

condition, he deserves it by his past state. Secrecy is a debt of that time; and as the engagement was not at all conditional, it subsists even when friendship ceaseth: so that we should not forbear to continue Debtor to a fickle and inconstant friend, if after having borrowed Money of us, he chance to break with us.

14. Now what hath been said of friendship, may be said of the transitory Confidence, which we take in some, in disclosing to them things which we would not have known. For this Confidence or Trust is a sort of friendship, which tho not so strong, nor lasting, ought to be regulated yet by the same principles. We ought to love all men, as we have said already, and this general love becomes friendship, being joyned with familiarity. Thus a familiarity of many years, is a friendship of many years; and a familiarity of one day, is a friendship of one day. So that as every friendship doth oblige Secrecy, touching what is said in the time of friendship, friends of one day, or one hour, are obliged to preserve the secret of all things committed to their Trust, during that day or hour, and the perfidiousness

ness of the one, can no way excuse that of the other.

15. Hitherto I have not pretended to establish any thing, but the general rule, which consists in judging of what we ought to keep secret, and what we may discover by the consent and approbation of those from whom we had learnt them, as far as this consent, and approbation is known to us. It is true nevertheless, that this rule admits of divers exceptions, but being seldom met withal in practice, do no way destroy the usefulness of the rule. 'Tis for example, an indubitable exception to this Law of Secresie; when any body communicates to us a criminal design, which we may hinder by discovering it. For we are so far from hurting civil Society, in not keeping it secret, that we should destroy it by keeping it. Crimes are not matter of Trust, and the commerce of discourse is not ordain'd to communicate evil designs one to another. Thus 'tis he who makes these detestable overtures, that abuses this chief tye of Society; and those who tell again these wicked discourses, that they may hinder the bad effects of them, make good use of the indiscretion.

tion of those from whom they slip.

16. We ought to say the same of certain Vices, pernicious to human Society, and dangerous for certain persons. For if it happen that men out of confidence discover them to us in discourse, and that afterwards they would engage themselves in employments, whereof these vices render them incapable, those to whom they have discovered themselves are not wanting to secrecy, if they avoid these unfortunate engagements by discovering what they know of those persons. I know by the declaration of a man, that he hath bad thoughts of Religion, and nevertheless I see him ready to enter into an Ecclesiastical State. 'Tis so far from being a fault to give notice to those who can hinder him, that it would be a greater not to do it.

17. Finally one may yet except perchance from the Law of Secrecy, certain occasions wherein men discover in discourse; designs and pretences, which tho not expressly wicked; are yet contrary to other pretences, and other designs, which we think *bona fide* more legitimate, and which we are more obliged to favour; provided that this obligation

ligation be so clear, that he who hath discovered himself rashly, may be convinc'd himself of it. For this disposition whereby he may know what we are, ought to suffice to advise him not to lay himself open to us; and his inconstancy having perswaded him to do it, it appears not absolutely unjust, that we profit by his imprudence, to sustain what we take for a greater good. But it is easy to see, that this case is very rare, and that it does not make thus a considerable exception from the Law of Secrecy.

18. Those who have some Conscience, or make profession to have any, do not forbear to colour with some pretence of usefulness, the reports they make of others, and think thereby to be exempt from all reproach of infidelity, when they have no engagement at all to silence. But to keep themselves from this Illusion, they must consider that all profit is not sufficient to justify these Reports. It must be great, certain, that we cannot procure it by any other way. For 'tis a real inconvenience only to be wanting in the confidence they have had of us. 'Tis a source of disunion, and 'tis to deprive ones self
of

of the means to serve those who injoin it. 'Tis to banish the overture of the Commerce of Discourse. Lastly, 'tis to injure human Society, by filling it with distrust and suspicions. Thus the wrong ought at the least to be recompenced by some certain and considerable profit.

19. Whosoever therefore feels himself thrust forward to report what he knows not, but by particular discourse, ought to examine all the following conditions; whether the thing which he is about to do, be very certain, and whether he hath not been mistaken in the Idea he hath conceived thereof; whether it is so constantly bad, that he hath no reason to doubt of it; whether it is important that it be known to avoid some great inconveniency; whether this inconveniency may not be avoided by some other means. Whether he have practised towards him who is interessed all the means prescribed by the Gospel to correct him. And if all these conditions happening, he be inclined to discover it afterwards, it ought to be precisely only to those who can give order therein, and not to those to whom these reports would only serve to satisfy their curiosity,

curiosity, or irritate their malignity.

20. We shall be easily convinced of the extream circumspection that ought to be had in these Reports; if we make reflexion on the consequences, and terrible indiscretions which may be committed. For as soon as any report is rashly escaped from us, we are no more the master of it. It multiplies and increases, and dilates it self mightily; It serves as an instrument to the passion of some, and as a nourishment to others, it produces oftentimes disagreements, and durable, and permanent animosities, which have long and troublesome consequences. It engages an infinity of people in considerable faults: and all this multiplication of sins shall be imputed to those who shall have given way thereunto by their indiscretion.

21. I have hitherto only considered the obligations to any secret thing which springs from the common interest of civil Society and Fidelity, which is a continuation of that transitory friendship, which is contracted with all those who out of confidence speak to us: And thus I have taken their Will for the rule of Reports, which may honestly be made from what shall have been told us. But

as

as from hence it would follow, that one might tell again all that they should be glad we should tell; it may be added, that we are often obliged to Secrecy, by the general rule of Charity, which forbids the reporting many things; altho those who have said them, should not think themselves obliged to it: for we ought not only to have respect to their Will, but also to their good, and to the good of others. It ought to satisfy us, that we know that some report may really hurt some one to publish it. In a word, we must regulate our Reports, not by what people desire in their passions, but by what they ought to desire, therein having a reason to suppose, that when their passion shall cease, they will be glad that they had managed them so: and when this passion shall not cease, we ought not to make our selves the ministers to do hurt to others, or to our selves.

22. Thus a man of worth will never fall into this fault, which *St. Austin* calls *A horrible Plague*, to report to those who are angry against others, the words of animosity which these persons might have said against them; and he will follow without trouble this maxim of that

Holy

holy Doctor, That 'tis not enough for a man truly Charitable not to excite or augment, by his reports, the enmities of men, but that he ought also to labour with his whole strength to extinguish and stifle them. *Animo humano parum esse debet Inimicitias hominum nec excitare nec augere male loquendo, nisi eas etiam extinguere bene loquendo studuerit.*

23. A man, by following these Rules, avoids one part of the faults which he commits in relating indiscreetly what he only knows by some particular Discourses. But that is not the only fault which he is obliged to be careful of upon this Subject; That of believing lightly the faults which others tell us, is of no less importance, and it may be said that 'tis yet more dangerous, because we are less watchful on that side, and we suffer ourselves so much more easily to fall thereinto, by how much it appears that we have no concern for it. We think that it belongs to him who relates something, to give an Answer, and that we may rely upon him for the truth of the deed which he relates. In the mean time it is quite otherwise: For the Soul of that Man who hearkeneth, remains not without action; she thinketh, judgeth, followeth her.

her Passions, acts also often times in following her Passions, and if she have not had cause to yeild to these reports, those Judgments are false, those Passions unjust, and those actions disorderly.

24. To comprehend, as to this point, the injustice and the averfness of most mens minds, we need only consider that when they are Cloathed with certain Ornaments, which the Order of this World hath assigned to Judges being assembled in a certain place, and things are proposed and treated of in certain Forms or Methods, they act ordinarily after a discreet, wise, and equitable manner. The discourses of the one Party make no Impressions upon their Souls, unless they know what the other side hath to Answer to it. They examine scrupulously the Proofs; they reject those which are false and uncertain; they give leave to weaken the depositions of Witnesses; they stop only at those which are not destroyed by reasonable disproofs, and they never declare a man guilty of a Crime which is imputed to him, unless he be absolutely convicted of it. The sole defect of Proofs sufficeth them to absolve the accused, and to condemn the Accuser; and when they want any of these

these forms, they condemn themselves of Temerity and Injustice. But when moved to judge of some one in particular without Power or Authority, they act clear another way. All Proofs suffice them, every Authority serves their turn, every Witness is kindly received; and upon the bare report of Persons either prejudiced, or ill informed, or wavering and without judgment, they will declare, without any scruple, people guilty of all that others shall have been willing to lay to their Charge.

25. Perhaps men will say that 'tis impossible to use in particular judgments all the formalities of solemn judgments. But if men observe not the Garb and the Pomp, they ought at least to observe therein what is necessary to assure themselves of the truth. Now it is no less necessary to form the Judgment and understanding in particular, to know what each Party saith, then to pass juridical Sentences of it. That which a passionate, inconsiderate, and unconstant Witness reports in a Discourse, deserves no more belief then what he deposeth before a Judge, and he deserves even less, because the Oaths which the Judges draw from them do much more applie people

ple, who have any Conscience or Honour, to say nothing that's false. A false and uncertain Proof is absolutely false and uncertain. Nevertheless those who would make a Conscience of Judging upon the Bench, on Proofs and Witnesses of this nature, make none at all oftentimes of Condemning people in particular upon very weak Proofs, and Witnesses yet less received.

26. Doubtless there is nothing more unreasonable then this unequal dealing; but it hath a very effective cause in the Corruption of mens hearts. If they shew some equity in publick Judgments, 'tis not because they really love Justice, they would love it every where, if they loved it truly; but on the one part 'tis because the Forms to which they are bound hinders them from going aside, and that on the other, the faults which they commit in publick would not remain absolutely unpunished, and would at least be revenged by the outcry they would bring upon them, if they were not Chastised by the superior Judges. There is nothing of that in the Judgments which we make in secret, upon the reports men make us. There is neither Form to be observed, nor Infamy to be feared.

feared. Thus as we have an entire liberty to follow the propensity of nature, we follow it; and this propensity carries us to receive without examination, all that men have related to the disadvantage of our neighbour; because we naturally love to jeer at others, to scorn them, and to see them humbled; And on the contrary, we fear the suspension, the reservedness, and the attention which hath always something of tormenting, and laborious, which makes us rather judge at hap-hazard, than take so much pains to judge well.

27. It is enough to have some Idea, and some love for equity to condemn this conduct. But lest, that taking the same resolution of judging advisedly of Reports which are made to us, and not believing any which be not clad with circumstances, which may make it entirely certain, we permit our selves nevertheless, to be deceived thereby, by taking that for certain, which indeed is not so; it is good to reflect upon the quantity of Reports, which we daily observe, which appearing certain and undoubted, are not yet at least found very false. Who, for example, would not believe the testimony of a sincere man, who saith
that

that he hath learnt such and such a thing, from such an ones proper mouth? Nevertheless, there happens daily differences amongst sincere persons, wherein one maintains, that he hath not said what the other affirms he hath heard; without any reason of suspecting either the one or the other, of falshood or knavery. This may happen a thousand ways, which might easily be discover'd if we would but give attention thereunto. We correct at every turn, the equivocations which slip from our pens, in what we write, for fear they should carry or bear false sense in other mens minds, about what is proposed to them, and the false consequences they may bring with them: and by the help thereof, we avoid always that what we write be not ill taken and misconstrued; and that we be not obliged to long Illustrations. What mistakes may then follow in transitory discourses, made without any care, application, or precaution, wherein we only express most things imperfectly; oftentimes referring them to the Intelligence of those we speak unto? And who can wonder if they be sometimes taken in a wrong sense, so that the one thinks he understands what the other

other never pretended to have spoken.

28. The sense and meaning of our expressions, is not absolutely included in the terms which we make use of to express our selves ; it depends sometimes of the preceding discourses. A Tone, an Inflection, a Behaviour, an Air alters the signification, and often it depends of thoughts which we imagine in those to whom speak : so that if the want of attention, make them take less care of this Consequence, this Tone, and this Air, or if we be deceived in attributing to them certain thoughts which they had not, and which yet made part of the sense, they deceive themselves almost necessarily in the understanding of what was said to them, and conceive quite another sense, than that which we would have them to conceive.

29. There springs from thence yet another mistake more surprizing. 'Tis that as the Soul is not accustomed to conceive these things by the help of words, every time that men take what is told them in a contrary sense, this false impression is painted in their false imagination, with some certain terms, whereby they borrow some part from those

those who speak, and they themselves furnish the other part thereof. But in the end, the remembrance of what they have added, slipping out of their minds, and not distinguishing what they have heard from what came from them, they attribute in good earnest to him, who hath entertain'd them with all the words which denote the false impression they have conceived, because they find it in their mind, clad with those words.

20. There are some likewise who reciting the discourses they have had with any one, and not remembring exactly some things, make them speak according to the remembrance which they have left them. But if one asked them then, if they be certain of what they relate, they would say no, and that they would not be vouchers. But in the conclusion, they come to quit their doubt, and to be assured that they have none in a very pleasant manner. For in making these rehearsals, they imprint them strongly in their memories; and on the contrary, they forget this disposition of distrust, and uncertainty, with which they had made them at first; so that they think in conclusion, that this remembrance is an effect of the things themselves, whereas they

they came from the frequent repetition they have made of them.

31. It is therefore just, when we accuse any one for having said something which may fall upon him or some other, to inform our selves before hand, that is, before we give credit to this report, whether those it concerns be agreed of it, and when we know that they disallow it, Judgement must be suspended, and enquiry made into the circumstances of the Report, how to determine on one side or another. For it is sometimes more probable, that he to whom we attribute the thing hath said it, and sometimes that he hath not. When for example, one busieth himself about a discourse, which notes something of an opinion, if he who disavows it, declares that not only he never held such a discourse, but that he is not, nor never hath been of this sentiment; his testimony is infinitely more credible, than the report of those who should pretend to have heard this discourse from him. For a sentiment is a thing which remains, in regard of which we can scarcely be deceived, whereas it is very easy to take other mens words in a wrong sence, and to be perswaded in this manner, to

have heard what he hath never said.

32. We should never have done, if we should report by piece-meals, all the ways whereby we may be deceived in the intelligence of what is told us. 'Tis sufficient that we be perswaded in general, that there are many, and that thus, not only in the differences wherein the one affirms he hath not said what another lays to his charge; but also in all reports which are made us, which are not absolutely certain, we must hinder the mind from resolving out of hand, and stop the motives, which are the consequences and marks of belief. By this means we shall not participate at all of other mens faults. We shall not enter into their passions. If we apprehend some suspicion of the conduct of those, whom we understand have drawn a Picture very disadvantageous, we shall not form an express judgment thereof, wherein the greatest ill that these discourses can do us, consists. Lastly, we shall always be so much more disposed to clear them, by how much we shall not have resolved concerning them.

33. There remains only one passage, by which Reports can hurt us. 'Tis when we our selves are the cause of it; and
t hat

that people whom we shall have entertained confidently, attribute to us afterwards, discourses, either ridiculous or imprudent, which of it self is able to exasperate us against them, who make or believe these Reports. It is much more necessary to be prepared to behave our selves like Christians in these rencounters, than 'tis to pretend that we can leave them absolutely. For how circumspect soever we may be of those we talk with, we are often deceived in the quality of their minds, and yet more in the disposition of their hearts. 'Tis likewise an effect of goodness to be deceived therein, and not easily to conceive suspitions of mens fidelity. It is moreover impossible to foresee all the ways, whereby false Spirits may abuse our words, and all the false Idea's which they may form by this strange mixture of their imaginations with our thoughts. We should then renounce entirely mens company, if we would not expose our selves to these inconveniences, and as that is neither possible nor profitable to all the world, we must be content to avoid them as much as we can, and resolve to bear them with patience, when we are not so happy as to avoid them.

34. If it happens then, that we fall thereinto, however it be, the first care and application we ought to have, is to hinder, that other mens faults be not to us an occasion of doing it on our side; and to beware also, that in complaining, that they have done us some injustice, it be not our selves who have offered it to them. For we know not what is imputed to them, for having said of us, because others have reported it. Now as they may have altered our words in relating them unto others, we may also have altered theirs, in relating them to our selves. We must then at least be well assured of the fact before we complain thereof, and 'tis wherein we ordinarily miss, because we rather follow the impressions of passion, which is stirr'd by the meer Image of the offence, whether true or false; then the light of reason which is regulated by evidence and conviction.

35. We owe them the same justice, and the same reservedness when they endeavour to judge of the motives, which they might have had in making these Reports. Some are worse then others, and it is not just to attribute without reason, the worst to them. It may be,
what

what our spite makes us take for an effect of hatred, disdain, and jealousy, is nothing but the effect of Inconstancy, Indiscretion, Prevention, and of a mistaken Conscience, and of a desire of diverting our selves. Let us have a care therefore, that our passions go no further, than our sight; and let us not imagine without reason, that we cannot be deceived in earnest to our disadvantage.

36.

Likewise we must not be unmindful upon these occasions, to demand justice of our selves against our selves, of all discourses, of all rash, inconstant, indiscreet, and of all wicked Judgments, which we have made of others; or pardon the mind for all evil effects, that they may have produced in their heart, whereof we may judge better at that time, by our own proper judgment; and as we know not, what God imputes to us yet, nor what remains thereof to pay to his Justice; we ought to be ravish'd that he hath given us means to obtain pardon for them by suffering some small injustice, upon the account of others.

37. Afterwards we must consider closely these reports and these noises which incommode us, being careful not to give them more substance and reality then they have. For oftentimes giving them a Being which they have not, and making them subsist by our imagination, when they are annihilated in that of others, we must not believe that men who busie themselves so little with the most important Objects, yea and the most solid, are of an humour to amuse themselves any long time at reports noised abroad without ground. All these relations have only a transitory course, and having served for discourse, for some days, to idle and lazy persons, they are dissipated and vanish away when they are weary of speaking and talking of them. We have nothing to do then but let them pass, and to slight them as vain whimsies, whereof nothing remains. Although they should subsist for a long time, and that they should make a very durable impression, pitty must be had of those who should conserve it, seeing that 'tis to them rather then to us that 'tis hurtful.

38. But we must not only endeavour to preserve our selves from the evil that these

these reports may do us, in swaying us to impatience: We must attempt to make them effectively useful; and they would be so doubtless, if we knew how to profit by the instructions which we might draw from thence, For what is there, for example, that can teach us better the vanity of that which men call reputation, then the inconstancy which the Commonalty of the World shew upon these occasions? What Proofs soever a man hath given of a good judgment, we shall not for that be less ready to hearken with pleasure to a ridiculous story, and without ground, which it shall please any one to make of him, provided there be found any cross mind which gives him liberty.

The World is naturally so wicked that it always seconds those who will destroy anothers reputation, and if it hath sometimes an esteem for certain people, 'tis in some sort against its will and in spite of it; so that the World is always glad to be assisted to get rid of this esteem, as of a thing that incommodes it. What is there then more ridiculous then to feed this vain Smoak, and to make it the end of our actions and labours?

39. As it is necessary that Worldly Goods be intermixed with bitterness, least men should cleave too fast to them, we ought to be glad also that Conversation which is none of the least of these Goods have its disgust; because there is almost nothing to which it is more dangerous to adhere unto. Men receive from it an Infinity of sensible and insensible Wounds; Virtue is often quite lost by it, and we gather together all the corruption which is spread into several minds. All that witholds us then to oblige us to a greater solitude, and to have Communication with few people, is very advantagious to us. Now there is nothing more capable to make us loath the Commerce of this World then to find little Honesty and Faith in most people that we meet therein, and to learn by experience how much it is necessary to be upon our Guard when we are to Treat with those whom we scarcely know. It may be said also that 'tis a happiness to be freed from an ill affected Spirit, and which is capable to abuse what is told it; that we ought to esteem our selves happy when we have notice by some indiscreet report which is raised

of us, that we had no more Commerce with it without great necessity.

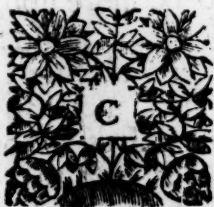
40. Nevertheless we ought not to stretch that Commerce so far as frequently to break with our Friends, when we have cause to impute some indiscretion to them; for we must suffer in them this fault as others. But it ought to be a warning to us continually to behave our selves better in respect of them, not to injure our selves, and to be more upon our Guard; and by this means persons who are neither Trusty nor Faithful will become oftentimes the most useful, by obliging us to apply our selves to be more cautious of our words, and to avoid all that may give them occasion to abuse them.



The Sixth Treatise.

Of the Remedies against Suspitions.

1.



Harity carries us not towards God and our Neighbour, but in some manner towards it self. I do this, saith St. Austin, *By the love of your love ; Amore tui amoris facio istud :* And 'tis in the same sense that the Kingly Prophet said in one of his, *Psalms , My Soul hath earnestly coveted to desire your justifications. Concupivit anima mea desiderare justificationes tuas.* He did not only desire to accomplish the Law of God, which he understands by the word Justifications, but he also desired the desire of it. One desire produced another, because 'tis impossible that we love any one, but we must

must love also the Love which we bear him, desire to increase it, and fear the diminution and decay of it.

'Tis then a necessary effect of a true and sincere Love for our neighbor to make us fear all that may slacken this Love. All the Clouds which obscure never so little the luster of Charity, are hurtful to it. All that hinders it from publishing it self freely, afflicts it; and it tends always to have a free course to its motions, and to dissipate all the obstacles which may hinder, stop, or trouble them.

Now there is nothing occasions this bad effect, more than the disadvantageous impressions we conceive of our neighbors, either upon Reports from others, or from the Idea's we form of them our selves. And consequently there's nothing Charity ought to be more vigilant of.

2. These Impressions are capable of weakening Charity many ways. What care soever we take not to judge at all; these Impressions nevertheless, give us an inclination thereto; for they are the effects of suspicions, and suspicions dispose to Judgments: and if these Judgments be rash, they may not only hurt, but even blot out Charity, because rash Judgments may

may be, according to *St. Thomas*. mortal sins. Thus, although these Impressions be not yet formed Diseases, we ought nevertheless to take them for fore-runners, and presages of a menacing sickness. They are like the first Fits of a dangerous Fever which is like to follow, except it be prevented by remedies, which Christian prudence may furnish us with.

3. These Impressions make us suspect the good it self which we see in others, and hinder also from partaking of it, both by the joy we ought to be sensible of, and by the thanks which it is just we should render to God, which is a very great evil. For God distributing his Graces to divers members, which compose the Body of his Son, which is the Church, and not giving it all to all, he will nevertheless that they become all common to them by Joy and by Thanks, which renders them all partakers of them. No man can say, that his proper Graces and Favours are sufficient without those of others, which made *David* say, *Particeps ego sum omnium timentium te, & custodientium mandata tua.*

4. These Impressions dispose men insensibly to take ill some words or actions of

of themselves innocent, and wherewith we should not have been troubled, if the mind had not been already prepossest with some suspicion. One Impression becomes the source of another, and what is worse, we are almost never aware of it; because we never ascend to the first foundation, which is a rashness of the first impression.

5. As they stop the course of our Charity towards those of whom we harbour these disadvantageous opinions, they often produce the same effect in their hearts, because we oftentimes suppress them not so clearly, as that they perceive them not. Our backwardness therein produces the like in them, which God imputes to us, in respect of the occasion we have given thereof. Thus we are insensibly separated from one another, and if there remain yet some Charity, 'tis so disguised, and hid by the Clouds of suspicions, that it remains without action.

6. We must therefore shun these Impressions as much as we can. This is the conclusion whereto Reason leads us. But we cannot always; For there are some Impressions grounded upon such evidence, that 'tis not possible to defend our selves from them. Likewise, we
cannot

cannot establish for a Rule, not to give ear to Reports, disadvantageous to our neighbour. For if they be true, and if they be necessary, or useful, we ought to hearken to them. Now there are some of this nature, when Jesus Christ wills that we take two witnesses of the faults which we desire to correct in our Brethren, he obliges these witnesses to see them, and when he orders to tell them to the Church, he wills the Church to hearken to them. Seeing that he inclines us to lament for the mischiefs of the Church, he pretends not that we should shut up our eyes, that we may not see them; seeing that he wills us to judge of false Prophets by their Works, he supposes that we know them. Finally, seeing that he obliges us to treat with Men, and to vary our Conduct according to their different dispositions, he would gladly, without doubt, that we be not dim-sighted, as to what appears to us thereof, without which, it would be impossible, but that we should fall into these snares men lay for us, which he commands us to avoid in these following words, *Cavete autem ab hominibus.*

7. There is properly then none but false and rash Impressions, which we are obliged.

obliged to cast away and destroy. It is enough in regard of the true ones, when contrary or against our neighbors, that we receive them with trouble, and that God see in our hearts, that we should be very glad they might be false; that they serve not as a sustenance to our malignity, but as an object of grief to our Charity, and in a word, if we look upon them in the same manner as our own, the continuation and increase whereof, we do not at all desire. .

8. But if this disposition be sincere, it is absolutely necessary that it make us glad when we have means to expunge this Impression, and that we know that we are deceived. 'Tis by this means that we may judge of the bottom of the heart. Because if men, on the contrary, pluck not these opinions from us but with pains; if we feel a secret spight against those who disabuse us; if we have eyes only to see what favours our suspicions, and that we have none for all that discover the uncertainty and falsity of them; tis a sign that we have some connection or tie thereunto, and that far from thinking them a burden, which is troublesome to us, and whereof we would willingly be delivered

delivered, we take a particular pleasure therein, which springs from the depravedness of the heart.

9. Charity demands yet more than this. It makes us not only receive willingly, all that is able to deface or diminish our suspicions, when men offer to undeceive us, but oftentimes obliges us to go even to Truth, and seek of ourselves the explanations which we are able to find. For it makes us regard these explanations as a Good, which deserves to be sought after, as the deliverance from evil, and from temptation; And lastly, as a debt of Justice which we ought to practice; Seeing that we all desire that others should practice towards us, this equity of clearing as much as they should be able, the Truth, instead of continuing in the Impressions, and those very disadvantageous, which men shall have given of us.

10. There is nothing more evident than the Justice and the Importance of this Duty. But for all that it is frequently very ill practised. For most part of the world are equally easie to receive Impressions, and neglect to clear themselves of them. Being more apt to suppose them true, than to examine whether

ther they are so or no, Self-Love ordinarily makes this side be taken ; and for that there needs nothing but to suffer the two main springs of mens Rule and Conduct, Idleness and Vanity to act : Idleness hinders us from the care of informing our selves exactly of things, because it is always accompanied with some sort of labour. Vanity fixing us to our opinions, makes us apprehend, being obliged to go from our word, and to acknowledge that we have been inconsistent and credulous. 'Tis by this means that the most false impressions become perpetual, and that there are so few that shake them off. When we cannot conserve them absolutely, we conserve always something of them, because we desire to give always self-love that consolation of not having been deceived without some reason. Even those, who through a motive of Conscience, forbear judging absolutely, are more easy to continue in suspense, than to free themselves wholly from it, by an entire explication. For Self-love is not mistaken in this condition: If we condemn not people, we think therefore we are dispensed from justifying them, defending, maintaining, and approving their

their Interest. We weaken by this doubt, the praises men give them ; we obscure the glory of their Virtue, and we keep them in a low condition, in looking upon them as suspected persons.

II. As Charity inspires us with sentiments, quite opposite to those of Self-love, so Charity makes us take a quite different Conduct. And to express in few words, the degrees through which Charity leads us. 1. It causeth us, not to receive these disadvantageous impressions of our neighbour, but by necessity and constraint, 2. It carries us to keep them in their just boundaries, and to avoid taking for certain what is not so. 3. Charity makes us always desire sincerely, that these Impressions be taken from us, and favourably to hear those who undertake to do it. 4. Charity enclines us to embrace with joy, all the ways to make Truth evident, and to free it self clearly of those impressions which hold its motives by a kind of constraint, by keeping nevertheless certain measures prescribed by prudence, not referring them to those who shall have reported these things, and not rendring them odious, by discovering them to be the Authors of those Reports.

12. There are some people who dare not clear themselves of their suspicion, for fear of startling those of whom they conceived them, in opening themselves to them. But there is a great deal of appearance that Self-love hath a greater share than Charity in this reserve. Charity is not so fearful, because it imagines not so easily, that those to whom we declare these suspicions are able to hurt it. Charity would think it an injury to attribute to them a delicateness so unjust as this. Charity knows how to make these explications in a simple and humble manner, that 'tis not possible almost to hurt it. For she is so far from shewing any inclination for those suspicions, that she shews on the contrary, that she desires nothing more than to forsake them in changing her opinion. We scarcely offend against those who desire to be enlightened with this Spirit. But that which makes one troubled at these explications, is, that those who do them, witness oftentimes more eagerness to maintain their opinions, than to instruct themselves whether they be true or not.

13. If we followed these Rules and this Conduct, we should see the greatest part of the differences which weaken Charity amongst persons professing Piety, vanish away. For there are very few of them which are not produced, or which are not maintained by these Impressions, which we do not explain at all. But the worst is, that every one would that others do them this Justice, and yet there are not many that practice it themselves in respect of others. Nevertheless this common Injustice must not withhold and hinder us from doing to others what Charity prescribes us, seeing that this Injustice is evil for them who fall into it, and that Charity is always a Good, and a Spring of Goodness for all those who follow her Motives and Rules.

14. Behold what we owe to our Neighbour when we have conceived these Impressions to his disadvantage. But what ought we to do when others on the contrary are prejudiced against us by injurious and unjust suspicions? Is it sufficient to bear them with patience, and to make no passionate nor angry complaints of them? It would be something to Preserve and keep our selves;

elves in this moderation towards them. But if we Consult nevertheless the rule of Charity, we shall find that oftentimes we must proceed farther to be satisfied exactly therein. Because some times we have reason to think and consider these Impressions as dangerous Diseases for our Neighbour, and to judge at the same time, that there are none but we who can remedy it, or at least that we can do it better then any one. Now in these two Circumstances can we doubt that Charity obliges us not to do all that we can to destroy in them these preventions, be it in clearing them as to the Truth, be it in employing other means proper to give them other thoughts of us, or lastly be it in avoiding all that may fortifie their preoccupations.

15. St. *Austin* teacheth these Maxims, and hath practiced them himself after an admirable manner. He looks upon these suspicions against the Honour of his Neighbour of so great a concern, that he calls them a Poyson able to make Souls to perish. *It is to be wished*, saith he, *that those who have these thoughts, Witness publicly what they have in the heart, that all sorts*

Aug. Ep.
223.

sorts of Remedies may be employed, rather then suffer them to be lost, without knowing it, by the Poyson of these pernicious doubts and suspicions: *Quam ut taciti pereant perniciosas suspicionibus venenati.* He teacheth that we ought not to be contented with the testimony of our conscience, and that Charity which seeks not after her own interests, obliging to do good, not only before God, but also before men, we ought rather to endeavour to persuade them of the falseness of their suspicions, then to rebuke them, because they make them appear. *Magis satagendum est quomodo persuadeatur hominibus falsum esse quod suspicantur, quam quomodo arguendi sunt qui suspensiones suas vocibus verbisque declarant.*

The principle of this Doctrine is contain'd in this other Maxim of this holy Doctor, *That, although he who disdains the Practices of men disdains also their rash suspicions, yet if he be truly an honest man, he doth not disdain their Salvation, because he hath so much love for Justice, that he loves even his Enemies, and desires to correct them, to the end he may have them for Companions of his happiness.*

*De Civitate
Dei. l. 14.
c. 19.*

Finally

Finally as it is clear that those we suspect unjustly are not more undeserving our Charity then those that injure us, we might apply to them what St. *Augustin* said of the obligation those, who have suffered some Injury, have to cure the Soul of what hath caused it. *This*

man, saith he, hath injured you, and in injuring you he hath hurt himself mightily, and you slight this hurt of your Brothers.

You see him perish, and you care not if he perish; your silence in this regard is more Criminal than the Injury which he hath done

you. Pejor es tacendo quam ille conviciando.

Injuries therefore done you must be forgotten, but forget not your Brothers hurt.

16. These are the Rules established by this holy Doctor, and he hath himself practiced them on an important occasion. For having been suspected by *Albina*, an illustrious Roman Lady, to have contributed through Interest to the Oath *Pinian* made to the People of *Hyp-*
pa, never to go out of their City, and to receive Ordination no where else. Instead of complaining of a suspicion so ill grounded, he thought himself obliged to purge himself thereof by Oath, which he did with an edifying humility, without

out reproaching *Albina*, and without other Prospect then to cure her of the Wounds she had received by this suspicion. *Sananda ista in vobis, non attendenda sunt, & nostra purganda vobis est Fama, si est Domino purgata Conscientia.*

17. This same Saint having rebuked something too severely, although without naming the person, the error of a Bishop who believed that God was Corporeal, and that he might be seen with human eyes, and this Bishop being so troubled at it that he refused to see him, though he offered to beg his Pardon for the offence, suspecting perchance that it was through Artifice that he shewed so much desire to appease him. Saint *Austin*, instead of being struck with this suspicion, endeavoured only to mollifie this Bishop, and to free him from this Impression, and there's nothing more humble then the manner of his doing it. First he condemned the harshness of his words. *I have been, said he, imprudent and lavish in this reproach, and have not considered what I owe to my Brother and College in the Episcopacy; I am so far from vindicating my self in this Point, that I Condemn my self: I am so far from excusing it, that I accuse my self of it. I beg*

I may be pardoned, and that this Offence may be concealed by the remembrance of our ancient Friendship. And to destroy the suspicion which this Bishop had of being slighted by him, and that it was by deceit that he sought it, he desired another Bishop whom he took for a Mediator, to free him from these thoughts, Assure him, said he, of my sincerity, and let him know with what sentiments of grief I have spoken to you of his discontent, how far I am from detracting and contemning him, how much I fear God in his Person, and how much I look upon him our Head, in whose Body we are all Brothers. *Novit quam eum non contemnam, & quantum in illo Deum timeam, et cogitem Caput nostrum in ejus Corpore Fratres sumus.*

18. Behold what St. *Austin* believed was requisite to be practiced on occasions where there is hopes of Curing other mens suspicions in giving them an account of their Conduct informing them of their true intentions. What if men judge with cause that these kind of explications would be unuseful, as it happens often enough; Charity should then apply us to seek out other means to destroy these preventions, not because they are hurtful, but because they may

hurt those who have them. Thus instead of complaints and reproaches, which serve only to exasperate mens minds, we should try to shew them who are prejudiced against us, a quite contrary disposition to that they lay to our Charge. If they think we have no esteem nor affection for them, we should endeavour to convince them by effective Proofs, that we love them, and that we esteem them truly. If they imagin that we mistrust them, we ought to seek dilligently some means to give them marks of Trust: If they suspect us for some fault which we are not guilty of, we should labour to take away by little and little this Impression from them, by avoiding what may either entertain and augment it, and by dealing with them in such a manner as is capable to destroy it; and by this means we shall be so far from being hurt by these suspicions, that they give us means to correct our selves of divers faults, and to enrich our selves by the practice of many Vertues.

19. There would be often times likewise no need to dissipate these suspicions by an application so expresse. It would be sufficient to dissemble them,
and

and to continue acting as accustomed with those who are addicted to them, without telling them we perceive them. The uniformity of our Conduct and Behaviour would consume them by little and little; and their minds would find they were changed, even without being aware thereof. But our impatience spoils all; we cannot expect the slow remedies; We would carry the minds away by force, that is to say, we would make them act against their nature.

20. Although a man have hurt himself by his own fault, though he have by the disorderliness of his living, made himself sick, no man pretends to cure him of his wounds and diseases by reproaching him; we must have recourse to the remedies proper for his distemper; and not wonder that they act only with time. Now we ought not to distinguish in this case the diseases of the Mind from those of the Body. How voluntary soever they may be, they are not for all that, less durable, nor less obstinate. He knows the nature of man's mind but badly, who thinks, that when it is once prepossessed, that Self-love hath an interest in an opinion, that there is formed an inclination in the heart to

judge in a certain manner, we are able to blot out in short time, all these impressions. It is necessary to change this sentiment, that the mind get new Lights, that it be familiar therein, that it loose a certain distrust, which the opinions wherewith it is prepossessed, give it of all that's contrary thereunto; that Self-love accustom it self by little and little, to suffer the reproach of being deceived, and that it forget in some sort, that it had taken another part. All this has need of time, and 'tis ridiculous to pretend, that because some suspicions relate to us, that we ought out of hand to rid our selves of them, and that mens minds ought to act in our consideration in an extraordinary manner.

21. Perhaps there may be more evil in this niceness, which makes us suffer with so much impatience, the unjust suspicions men conceive of us, than there are in these suspicions, whereof we complain. We judge of others, according to our understanding, & those who have but little, judge sometimes ill enough, their hearts for all that, not consenting much thereunto. Oftentimes they have Charity for those they condemn unjustly, and would be very willing to serve them.

Whereas

Whereas this impatience which we experience in the evil judgments men make of us, is a fault which certainly comes from the depravity of the heart, and from the pride whereof it is full.

What do we know but God will permit sometime, that men judge of us little favourably, and that they suspect us wrongfully, to make us more sensible of this wound, and to give us means to heal it? What do we know also, but that he hath annexed our Salvation to the use of this means? Thus in complaining of it, we complain in reality of a favourable remedy God offers us. We oppose the designs of his mercy towards us; we condemn his favours, and we refuse to enter into the way of salvation.



The Seventh Treatise.

That we ought not to be scandalized at good Mens faults.

Lexius qui non fuerit scandalizatus, me.



When Jesus Christ said, *Blessed is he who shall not be scandalized in me*, he gave us to understand by this expression, that 'tis a happiness very rare to be free from this scandal, and by consequence that 'tis a misery very frequent to fall into it. Now if it be true, that the number of these happy men be small, and the number of these miserable Creatures great, we have all a great interest to instruct our selves, what it is to be scandalized in Jesus Christ; and of the extent of this Word, seeing that we would all be of that small number of these blessed, and not of the great number of the miserable.

Jesus

2. *Jesus Christ* is properly a subject of scandal to those who know him not, and he is unknown to men only, because he is hidden from them. We stumble not against a stone, but only because we see it not; We hurt not our selves against *Jesus Christ*, but because we know not what he is. Thus to be scandalized at *Jesus Christ*, is not to know him, and to condemn him through blindness and ignorance. That which hides *Jesus Christ* from us is therefore that which makes *Jesus Christ* an occasion of scandal to us. Now there are many things that hid him from men.

His Meanness, his Poverty, his Sufferings, and all the marks of his Infir- mity have hid him from the Jews. They could not believe that this *Messias*, whom they imagined to themselves, ought to be environed round about with Pomp and Glory, could be that miserable man they saw amongst them, and who was not distinguished from other men by any exterior Luster. They could not imagine that man whom they had cru- cified, was the Author himself of Life, and therefore *St. Paul* calls the Cross, *The Jews Scandal. Judeis Scandalum.*

4. But they are not only the Jews who

are scandalized at the weakness of Jesus Christ. This scandal comprehends generally all those who love the World. All those, saith *St. Austin*, who love what Jesus Christ disdained, and who hate what he loved, despise Jesus Christ. For is it not to disdain his Wisdom to judge of things quite otherwise than he doth, and to chuse quite contrary to him, to think that a Good, which he believed an Evil, and an Evil what he thought a Good? Now to disdain the wisdom of Jesus Christ, is to disdain Jesus Christ, and to be scandalized at him.

5. O how great is this scandal, and how common! For how few are there who are exempt? How few who esteem not men less when clad with the Liveries of Jesus Christ, that is to say, with his poverty, and who inwardly honor them not more, because they were those of his enemies, which are the pomps of the world, which *St. Austin*, with reason, calls the Devils raggs, *pannos Diaboli*. What are Princes Courts, or rather what is the World, but a place where it is a shameful thing to imitate *Jesus Christ*?

6. But yet we may not fall into this scandal, which is only proper to those
who

who are possessed with worldly Love. We may nevertheless say, that there are few amongst the just themselves, who participate perfectly of this happiness, of not being scandalized at Jesus Christ, not only because they have not always some inclination for things which Jesus Christ hath disdain'd; but also because they are scandalized at him many other ways, which are necessary to be consider'd.

7. Not to be scandalized at Jesus Christ, we ought to know him, and to know him, we ought to understand him entirely. Now Jesus Christ entirely is not only the Head, but also the Members. He lives in them, he is hidden in them. Thus we take another for him when we despise him in his members wherein he is hid.

8. It is much easier to condemn Jesus Christ in his Members then in himself, because there he is more hidden. He was not private in the world, but by meanness of nature, but he is often private in the faithful by many faults, which Jesus hath not had, and also by many faults, which rob us sometimes of the splendor and the odour of their virtue, and make us suspect that they had nothing in them but human. And as this scandal is very dangerous we must embrace all ways imaginable to shun it.

9. One of the principal ways is to comprehend well with what conditions Iesus Christ is hid in the faithful. We must know for that, that this Divine Kingdom, which he came to establish in this world, is an interior Kingdom, *Regnum Dei intra vos est*. He is hid in the bottom of the Soul; where God resides with the Riches of his Grace without shewing often any splendor outwardly. A Soul by the possession of this Kingdom, becomes the object of Gods pleasure; she becomes his Throne and Temple. The Angels who know him, discover therein all these grandeurs. But men discover them only by certain obscure lights, which make them appear in their actions, and in the conduct of their lives, all the rest is darkened by the infirmity of the flesh.

10. This obscurity wherewith God covers in the World the Treasures of Grace, which he puts into Souls, produceth great Good, and great Harm, according to the good or bad use is made thereof. 'Tis one of the great means by which God exercises in the world his Mercy and Justice. It hinders on the one part, that the Just exalt not themselves, nor loose themselves by the sight
and

and knowledge of their proper excellence, and it delivers them on the other part from the temptation which might be caused in them, by the esteem and admiration of men who should know them. It conserves them in the way of Faith, in depriving them of the sight of onething which would draw them from it by motives too human. For if *St. Augustine* say, that God hath not Aug. de Civ. vii. l. 15. been willing that the renewal c. 4. ing which Grace produceth in our Souls should extend itself, even to the Body, by conferring immortality to it, lest the hope we ought to have in him, should be too interessed; If this same Saint ascertain, that it is by the same reason that he permits the just to be afflicted in this world, as well as the wicked, for fear we should aim in the services which we render to God, to exempt our selves from temporal evils; We may likewise say, That he permits us not to see the excellence of a just Souls beauty, and the horrible deformity of a Soul in sin, lest it should be through these interessed motives; that we should desire justice, and have an horror for sin.

11. But if this obscurity produce some good in respect of some, it may be said, that

324 *That we ought not to be scandalized*
that it produces very great evils in respect of others, and that 'tis the principal cause of wicked mens blindness. For 'tis that makes worldly people believe, that there is nothing in men worthy of esteem, but what flatters their senses, and condemn most part of honest and good men, not seeing in them what they love. What is told them of the good of the soul, they look upon it as a meer imagination, because they neither perceive nor see it. Thus they distinguish men only by the outward qualities, and by the relation they have to their passions, and as virtuous men participate always of the Spirit of the World, they participate also a little of this Illusion. The too great ties they have of outward qualities, take from them the sentiment of the spiritual misery of many Souls; and often also they have not the esteem they ought to have of the real Goods others possess, because they are covered with outward faults, of which they are too sensible. This is one of the most ordinary means, whereby Jesus Christ is scandalized in his members. For as the Jews would that their *Messias* should be environed with rayes of Glory, we would also that honest men should have no defect, neither
inwardly

inwardly nor outwardly, and unless they have this agreeableness which strikes our senses, we have a propensity to condemn them, as seeing their faults and their miseries, but not their Riches and their Goods.

12. This scandal increases infinitely, when these faults which we observe in them, are not simple natural faults, but faults of manners, and true and absolute faults. For if we only need to beg of God to preserve us from the temptation which springs from thence; there is danger that these faults which we see in those, who pass for pious men, do humble and debase them so in our sight, that we deprive our selves of the edification, which we might draw from all the other virtues which we observe in them. Oftentimes these virtues are suspected by us; we begin to apprehend that we have been deceived. We know not what to stick to, and we enter into a certain despair of finding in the world solid virtues.

13. This temptation is at the same time very dangerous, and very ordinary. For it is a hard thing to live long with pious people, but we shall find in them many faults, not only imaginary, but true and real ones. Human Wit never hides
it

326. *That we ought not to be scandalized*
it self absolutely. They suffer themselves to be cheated and beguiled. They are carried away by unjust prejudices: they are sometimes precipitate in their judgments. We see some who are resolved in their thoughts, others who are curious and delicate in what concerns them nearly: Others who are tender and nice in small inconveniences. There are some that their zeal carries to excesses. Lastly, There are almost none in whom nature shews not her self by many ways. But if men thereupon are inclined to condemn them, they come to condemn all the world, and to pass from aversion for faults, to aversion for men, according to this saying of an antient person. *Qui vitia odit, homines odit.*

14. 'Tis good therefore to fortify ourselves against this temptation by considerations, which may be found in Faith. Now Faith furnishes us with what may be able to dissipate this temptation, if we apply our selves seriously to it. For Faith shews us that the faults of the just are profitable to them in divers manners, as hath already been said, and likewise, that oftentimes God permits them more for others than for themselves. He darkens their splendor, that those who de-
serve

serve not to enjoy it, may be deprived of it. He takes from before our eyes, their good examples, to punish us for not having profited by them; he holds back the odor of their Piety, because the world hath not received it, as it ought.

15. We are scandalized then often at certain faults in just men, which are not so much for them as for us. They hurt them not, but they hurt us; they are Thorns which are good for them, because they warrant their Piety from the danger it would be in of being withered by mens praises; but these Thorns wounding us, hinder us from approaching, and from perceiving the good smell of them. And thus there are none but we who loose thereby.

16. Just mens faults enter into the order of Providence, and often God makes use of them to execute his greatest designs against the wicked. Possibly *St. Chrysostome* might have dealt better with *Areadia* and *Eudoxia*; and that if he had done so, they had not abandoned him to the fury of *Theophilus*: But because *Theophilus*, and the wicked Bishops of that time deserved to be abandoned to their passions, and blinded by a success, conform to their designs; God did permit

328 *That we ought not to be scandalized*
mit this Saint to follow the heat of his
zeal.

17. There are virtuous men, who examining the Life of *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, were perswaded to believe that he might, without violating the Laws of the Church, have yielded to many things, which King *Henry the Second* desired of him; yet the heart of this Holy Bishop being right, and the heart of King *Henry* corrupted, the proceedings of this Saint being Humble and Just, the Kings proceedings violent and unjust, God rather judged of this difference by the purity of the Saints Heart, and the wickedness of his adversary, than by the bottom of the cause, and did not omit to justify him by many miracles, when the whole Church was divided upon his score.

18. The Cardinal of *Arles* was Author of an enterprize which caused great troubles, which was the deposing of *Eugenius IV.* This action was not followed in the Church. It is no where observed that he repented the act; and yet he hath done miracles after his death, God having not laid to his charge what he did through zeal of Justice, though in some circumstances which rendred his
action

action imprudent. St. Peter of Luxembourg, St. Vincent Ferrier, St. Catherine of Siena, were in divers and different times of Schisme, and by consequence some of them for the Anti-Pope; yet nevertheless this blemish hath not hindred their Sanctity.

19. They who write the Lives of Saints think that 'tis their Duty to set forth all their virtues, and to hide all their faults. But I do not know if they should not do as well to take notice of all their faults, as of their virtues, to hinder thereby, that men be not scandalized at such as appear in some pious men which we know. Whosoever for example, shall make reflections on the manner how Three Saints, to wit, St. Epiphanius, St. Jerome, and St. Cyril of Alexandria, acted upon account of St. John Chrysostome, will wonder no more that virtuous men be sometimes prevented, and fall sometimes into excess, and they will conceive, that there is very great limitation in this passage. *Charitas operit multitudinem peccatorum.*

20. We see often in Saints some faults which God sees no more there; whereas we see not in our selves, those which are truly there. If they commit faults
through

330 *That we ought not to be scandalized*
through ignorance, the heat of their
charity purifies them, even without their
acknowledging them, and thus they sub-
sist no more. If they commit somethro
weakness, or thro some passion, they
humble themselves, and they rise again
more strong than they were before their
fall, and by this means again they sub-
sist no more. But the faults of Souls
grown cold, altho more inconfide-
rable in appearance, subsist always in
the eyes of God, because they want this
fire of Charity to consume them, and
because they are not restor'd again ab-
solutely.

27. We must distinguish faults of passion
from faults of darkness, and faults of
light; the faults of understanding, from
faults of the heart: Nor is there pro-
perly any but God who can judge of
faults which spring from ignorance,
wherein Cupidity appears not to have
any share at all: Nor is it permitted for
men to determine of the degree.

22. All Saints have in their hearts a
sincere disposition to love, and follow
every known Truth. But they know
not equally all Truths, nether are they
equally appropriated to all those they
know. God enlightens and touches them
differently

differently, according to the several designs he hath upon them, and by giving them an ardent Love for certain Truths, by which he will sanctify them; he suffers sometimes that in respect of others they remain in some kind of obscurity, or in a want of judgment; which comes not from the corruption of their hearts, but from this, that God applies them to other things. 'Tis this that makes these who love these Truths, to be oftentimes troubled to see them so little concerned for them, because they consider not that they themselves are in this deprivation of Light and Judgment, in regard of many others, and that the heart of man being limited, and narrow in the condition it is in, as to this life, God doth not exact, that it should love Truth, Truth in all its extent, but only that it be the love of Truth, and not Cupidity, which should be the principal of its actions.

23. When God leaves the Saints thus in Ignorance, as to many Truths, or diverts and stops the occasions, which might engage them to commit some faults thro ignorance, or hides by the purity of their hearts, and by the ardency of their Charity, those which they commit, it happens nevertheless from

332 *That we ought not to be scandalized*
from hence, that we may easily make ill
use of their examples, whether it be in
imagining that we ought to follow blindly
all they have done, or in behaving
our selves, so as to condemn these Saints,
because of these wants of Light. But
both the one and the other of these scan-
dals must be remedied by the conside-
ration of this various dispensation which
God makes of the knowledge of this
Truth. For we see by this on the one
side, that there may remain darkness in
the Saints, in respect of certain points,
in which by consequence they ought not
to be taken for guides, and we have
reason to conclude on the other, that
it follows not, that those in whom we
perceive the wants of Light, in respect
of certain Truths, cannot be Saints by
the application they have to others.

24. We may add to this, that per-
chance those who hurt in appearance
certain Truths thro ignorance, and
lack of Light; have before God, more
love and zeal for them, than these who
shew a great heat for those same Truths.
For God hath particularly regard to the
bottom of the heart, and when he sees
there a sincere love for Truth and Ju-
stice,

stice, a disposition to follow them at the cost of all things, he hath less regard to the darkness, which hinders this Love to spread it over certain particular points. Whereas it happens sometimes, that this Zeal, so apparent for certain Truths, is nothing but the effect of Self-love, and a tie to its proper sense. We maintain Truth, as we should maintain what is false, if we had the same engagements to do it; and oftentimes God sees nothing that's sincere at the bottom of the heart, which leads directly to Truth.

25. Those who by a more exact study of antiquity, should have acquired knowledge and some light, which very Holy persons should not have had, should yet have occasion to humble themselves by this thought; that those Truths, tho' great and important, are not ordinarily those, the practice whereof is most frequent, and which are the principal of the common actions which compose our lives. Thus as the occasion of practising them are not very ordinary, they become often barren in these who know them, and we may easily believe, that men love them without

334 *That we ought not to be scandalized*
out any real or effective love for them.
It is altogether contrary with common
Truths, as with those which teach to con-
verse with our neighbour, in an edify-
ing manner, to have God present in all
our actions, and to do nothing but by
his Motive, and his Spirit, to mortify
all the inordinate excesses of Self-love,
to lop off all things useles to this life,
to correct the senses in all that we can,
to moderate our passions, to govern all
the motions of Mind and Body, not to
complain of little evils, to receive fa-
vourably those who mind us of some
defect, not to be tyed to our own Sense
and Light; to be reserved in our judg-
ments. Those Truths which prescribe
these actions, are not less Truths than
the others, whereof we have spoken, but
they have this advantage, that the pra-
ctice is ordinary, and that we scarcely
flatter our selves with loving them, with-
out we love them truly. These are
those which all the Saints have known,
and 'tis in practising them, and loving
them, that they are become Saints.
Whereas it happens, that those who
are more knowing in these Truths less
frequent, and which serve only as Rules

to great Actions, apply themselves much less to these common Truths, whose continual practice is the true source of the sanctification of Souls, and of the edification we give to those who are witnesses of our actions.

26. Nevertheless, it happens some times that persons who appear very exact, and very edifying in their common actions, are sunk down in great businesses, for having neglected to search the Lights which were necessary for them to march therein, or through other secret reasons, which God knows, and that others on the contrary, whose Lives indeed were less exact, and stuf more with small faults, shew great courage and force in those occasions of importance, and shew also, that they had at the bottom of the heart, a solid and true love for God: And that's it which ought to humble in their turn, those who are more outwardly and orderly and more composed, because they know not for all, that what their force is, and that perchance they are with all this outward regularity, weaker and more imperfect before God, than those whose imperfections strike more upon the
the

336 *That we ought not to be scandalized*
the eyes of the world. So great a care
hath God to keep in this life, all things
in obscurity, and uncertainty, to take
from us all right of magnifying our selves
in our selves, and contemning others.

The



The Eighth Treatise.

The means of profiting by bad Sermons.

I.



WE cannot avoid sometimes hearing bad Sermons. For besides that, we know not all the bad Preachers, and that 'tis not just to avoid them until we know them. The Preachers themselves are not alike in Preaching, either always good, or always bad; and that thus in seeking out a good Sermon, we oftentimes find a very bad one. Methinks a pious person cannot dispense with himself, from hearing Preachers, what ever they be. Because Sermons in general being necessary for the Church, and God having chosen this way for the instruction of his people, it is requisite, that they whose Piety serves

Q

for

for a Rule to others, contribute to cause this ministry to subsist, in giving the example to render themselves assiduous in publick instructions. Otherwise if thro a judgment which they might make of the Preachers; they did perswade the people to dispense with the hearing them, this Ministry would by little and little be laid aside, and the simple poor people would find themselves thereby deprived of the principal means which God hath given them to be instructed with the necessary Truths for their Salvation.

2. But that they may not ordain only this action to the edification of others, and that they may profit also thereby themselves, their Piety ought to apply them to find some means whereby they may profit by all sorts of Sermons: and seeing that 'tis not in their power to cause, that all those who engage themselves to preach, acquit themselves of this ministry as they ought, they ought to labour to acquit themselves as they should of that duty of hearing Sermons, which is another function, having likewise its obligations, and by consequence its rules.

3. We see at first, that the seeking out of these means, and of these rules, ought to consist in finding out Holy inventions, whereby to edify our selves by bad Sermons. For there needs no method to gain by good ones. Every one knows, that he ought to open his heart to solid Truths, which are declared to him therein; that he ought to beg Grace of God, that they increase as Divine Seed; that he ought to conserve them in his memory as a precious Treasure; that he must act in such sort, that weighing them often in his mind, they may take root, and spread themselves there, and that lastly he must seek occasions to reduce them into practice.

4. We know yet, that we ought not to place in the number of bad Sermons, those, wherein Truths, otherwise solid and edifying, should be proposed after a gross and unpleasing manner; wherein the Preacher should have but a little Talent, little of outward address, little facility to express himself. For provided, that the Subject be good, it is requisite that a judicious Auditor fix himself thereto, and that he make use of it to cover the outward defects.

5. It ought to be the same, when that which stumbles us in a Preacher, is nothing but the little relation of his thoughts to the matter. For provided, that the Truths be good and profitable in themselves, what imports it, that the relation of it be so just? But I would gladly, says one, that they had been proposed to us in another application. Well, separate them from this application which stumbles you, and consider them in themselves, or make you another application of them. 'Tis always to oblige you, to have given you means to be attentive to these Truths. They deserve very well to be attentively considered for themselves.

6. But there are Sermons which are defective, even at the bottom, and which are only made up of words, which have more of sound than of sense in them. There are some wherein are distributed only shallow speculations, and unsolid thoughts: which leave the Soul in want and hunger, whereto we can add nothing for the correction of her manners, and wherein the people comprehend as little, as if they were made or preached in an unknown language. There are some likewise, wherein the Preachers

ers dissemble or weaken the Truth by a criminal cowardise or baseness, or alter it through Ignorance or Interest.

As tis impossible that those who have a little light, should not acknowledge these faults, we ought not to force them that they should dissemble them to themselves, but only that they extol not and magnify them. On the contrary, it is good that they endeavour to comprize the greatness of the excesses which are committed in this point, and that they lament before God for so unworthy a manner, wherein Truth is handled by men. For this Holy lamentation conducing to Piety, all that excites it is profitable to them, and contributes to their edification.

7. In considering with this Spirit, the outrages done to Jesus Christ, in the dispensation of his word, they will find that they are not less, than those he received in the distributing of his Body; and that it may be said likewise, that they are greater, and that thus they ought to be to us a greater cause of grief, humiliation, and terror. For altho there may be many criminal and vicious Priests, who insinuate themselves to the administration of the Sacraments
and

34? *The means of profiting*

and the distribution of the Body of Jesus Christ; there is nothing more rare then to find of them impious enough to give to the faithful unconsecrated Hosts instead of the Body it self of *Jesus Christ*, or to mingle Poyson with Consecrated Hosts, that thereby they may kill the Bodies of those who receive them.

Thus altho the wicked Priests commit a Sacriledge through the boldness they have of insinuating themselves into to Divine Functions, those nevertheless who participate of the Body of *Jesus Christ* by their Ministry, receive no prejudice thereby. 'Tis not the same with the Word of God. For there are not only some Priests who dishonour it by presuming to Preach it, when they ought to think of nothing more then doing Penance for their Crimes, and who draw upon themselves thereby the Reproach which God makes them in these words of the Kingly Prophet. *Peccatori autem dixit Deus, quare tu enarras Justitias meas, & assumis Testamentum meum per Os tuum?* But there are those who poyson it by their bad Maxims, or by their Passions, and they who do this, instead of giving life to Souls, bring often death. And lastly there are some, who, instead
of

of the true word of God, distribute only their imaginations, which is not hurtful only to the ignorant in depriving them of the nourishment they have need of, but deceives them wickedly by suffering them to receive, as the Word of God, thoughts altogether human and profane.

8. We need not only apply these considerations to the present State of the Church to acknowledge that there are a great number of Christians that suffer what the Scripture calls *Famam Verbi*, The desire of God's Word, because those who are charged with this instruction, instead of solid Truths drawn from this word, wherewith they ought to nourish them, feed them only with their own proper thoughts and vain speculations; and that thence it is that the Church experiences in many places this terrible Wound wherewith God has at other times threatned to strike the *Jews*, which the same Scripture calls *Ubera Arentia*, The Breasts giving no Milk, that isto say, Pastors without light, and incapapable of nourishing their people with the Doctrine of Truth; which at the same time ought to stir up in us sentiments of Compassion for the spiri-

tual misery of so many Souls, motives of acknowledgment, that God hath treated us more favourably than them, in giving us the knowledge of his Truth, which he suffers them to be deprived of, and a wholesome fright through the consideration of the little use we have made of all these helps.

9. If these Sermons which please us so little of themselves, did make us enter into these Sentiments, they would also become as profitable to us as those which fill our memories the most with edifying Truths. There are hardly any of more importance than those which may be learnt by the chastisement which God exercises upon the Church. For he shews that the knowledge of Truth is not due to us, that we deserve to be deprived of it; that this deprivation is the just punishment of our disorders; that we ought to impute to our selves this want of Evangelical Preachers; that thus the faults they commit in the exercise of their ministry, are in some sort ours, seeing that 'tis to punish us, that God permits them.

10. We must not imagine that we have no reason to fear, as to our selves, the effects of Gods wrath, under presence

tence that we are better instructed, and that we have divers ways to supply the defects of Preachers. For God hath also other sorts of blindnesses to spread over us, which we ought not to apprehend less. If he punish us not by depriving us of the knowledge of some particular Duty in some important occasions, and this deprivation is enough to make us enter into some unlucky engagements, and to render all our other knowledges useless. We have not therefore less need of his light, nor less obligation to seek it. And as this Light is communicated in the ordinary way by the Ministry of men; no man can say, he hath not need of a Preacher, that is, of a man who makes him understand what God requires from him.

11. But there is no need that this consideration of the disorders, which are committed in the dispensation of Gods word, as well as in the distributing the Body of Jesus Christ; apply us only to the consideration of his Justice towards the wicked; it ought to fill us yet more with the admiration of his bounty towards the Elect. For 'tis for them that he suffers all those prophanations, with an incomprehensible patience. 'Tis for them

them he commands, that his Body reside even to the end of the world upon our Altars, and that it enter into the mouths of all those who would receive him without having regard to the Sacriledges that so many impious people commit in receiving it, to the end, that his chosen may not be deprived of this Divine nourishment, which is the ordinary means of their Salvation. Hence it happens sometimes, that the Body of Jesus Christ remains whole years in the Churches, in the hands of wicked Priests, who dishonour it every day by new Impieties, and receives thereby abundance of outrages on the score of disorderly Christians, to the end, that some poor Woman may have the means to partake thereof, or to come and adore it. 'Tis also sometimes not there for those who compass this particular Church, because they may be all impious and wicked. It is there for those who shall spring from them long after. It is also in consideration of his Elect, that he suffers that some wicked men corrupt and prophane his word in declaring it, and that he permits that men preach it to people who draw no profit from it, and who become only more criminal thereby, to the end, that some simple Souls, who shall be there present

present, may be instructed, and edified with it; or at least, that the Ministry being conserved, some of the chosen, who perhaps shall be many years after, may find in these places, instructions they may have need of.

As Piety then ought to make us adore the infinite Charity of Jesus Christ, residing upon our Altars, and suffering for the good of his Elect, all the outrages which he received there, it ought not to incline us less to adore this same Charity, which makes him endure the most scornful manner, wherewith his Truth is Treated, whether in pronouncing or in hearing it. And it is very just to conclude, that it would be the height of ingratitude, not to expose our selves for the interest of Truth to receive some evil usage on the score of men, seeing that God suffers every day, that this Truth be exposed to so many disdain, and to so many irreverences for our good.

12. Nevertheless, great care must be taken to keep this consideration of faults committed by those who pronounce the word of God within its just limits, lest it should carry us too far; and that as there appears little Light, little Uction, and often little Judgment in certain

Sermons.

Sermons, it make us not conclude that the Preacher is absolutely unprovided of all those qualities. For this Judgment may be ill-grounded. There are some persons who preach very ill, and who nevertheless have Piety, and also Light and Judgment in other things; and the reason thereof is, that they preach ill, because they have a false Idea, and that they have at first proposed evil models. They apprehend, I know not how, that Sermons ought to have something that's excellent, sublime, and extraordinary; and that common and popular thoughts are to be avoided therein. Thus when they are to preach, they neither consult the Heart, nor the disposition of their Auditors; they skip into a certain region of their mind, where most commonly they inhabit not, and where they have a magazine of false thoughts, and shallow speculations, which this false Idea wherewith they are pre-occupied makes them approve. But as their Judgment is only spoiled in this place, they forbear not to be judicious in other things, when they leave the Pulpit, where they are in some sort in a violent state and condition, and are returned to their ordinary manner of speaking and thinking;

13. After we shall have practised this equity towards the Preacher, and resolved to manage him as well as we shall be able in what shall be said before others, for fear of hindring the fruit he might make upon those who should have other Considerations, than we. We shall be forced to consider all that he says, and endeavour to find therein something which may be able to edify us, and whereunto we may fix our minds; and it is very hard if we prosper not therein, if we do it faithfully; or that we have not at least reason to be convinced, that 'tis our lack of Light and Virtue, which hinders us from profiting thereby.

14. We desire always that all Sermons should contain some brave principle of Morality well expressed, and well explicated, that they may make us observe some considerable defect in the lives of Christians, that they may make us prone to practice some important obligation, And indeed it were to be wished that they were such; and 'tis a defect when that is not; because Preachers ought to imagine that the vulgar people are scarcely edified without these kind of Sermons, which made *St. Francis of Sales* say, *That he did not find that a Sermon was*

good.

350 *The means of profiting*

good, if the Preacher had not for his Mark the Building some Corner of the Walls of Jerusalem. Nevertheless we ought to acknowledge that 'tis also a fault to have so strict a Piety. Christian Virtue has a larger extent. It is not always busied with the correction of our manners, nor with the care of instructing or teaching Christian Principles. It is forgetful sometimes of it self, that it may be raised absolutely to God, to admire him, to Praise him, to consider his Mysteries in themselves without any reflection upon it self, to Contemplate the works of his Mercy and Justice, to rejoyce at the Graces he hath bestowed on the Saints. Now there are no Sermons which are not able to stir up in us some of these Motives, if we were disposed thereto, and if our minds were not so limited as not to search occasions of edification but of a certain kind, which makes that oftentimes we find as few to edifie themselves by certain Sermons of the Fathers, as by those we hear now a days.

15. We flatter our selves ordinarily with being of the number of those, whom St. *Austin* calls *non Verborum sed Rerum avidos*, greedy of Things, but not of Words,

Words; and we imagin that 'tis this which displeases us in Sermons where there are more words then things. Nevertheless we may say that this disgust comes rather from a contrary defect, that is to say, for that we are more fixed to the manners and ways then to the things themselves, and that we love the rarity, the excellency, and the aptness of thoughts, better then their Solidity and Truth. For lastly there are no Sermons so bad where there is not something of Truth; but they touch us not at all, because they are either common or out of their place, or ill expressed, or that they are mingled with false thoughts, or they miss the Subject. So seeing all these faults joynd to Truth take the relish of it absolutely away, we must needs have but little love for it. A Diamond cast into the dirt, looses not its luster nor its price in regard of us; we take great care to dig it out when we discover it, and often apply our selves thereto so much the more as we find it in a place that seems to dishonour it. We should make as much of this Pittance of Christian Truths, which is found in certain Sermons, it would be just that we apply our selves thereunto

thereunto with so much more attention that our Spirits might not be distracted by a great number of things which might deserve application. Now there is no Christian Truth considered as it ought, that is not capable to comfort us, and likewise there is not any which will not appear to have a very large extent if we have light enough to penetrate what it includes.

16. We ought to consider well that these common truths which we hear with disgust are infinitely above all that can be found in the Books of Paganism, which men read with so much esteem, and so much pleasure; That 'Tis a particular Grace that God has done us to have been pleased to discover them to us, having kept them hid four thousand years from all men; that the Prophets themselves and the Saints of the Old Testament have sighed to know them in this excellency with which they are revealed to us; that they make up part of those Judgments which David spoke of with so much sense of acknowledgment. *Non fecit taliter omni Nationi, & Judicia sua non manifestavit eis.* And this may suffice to give us Confusion that some human defects with which they

they are enveroined, may make us loose entirely the gust and love for them.

17. As St. *Augustin* says, That men discern Beauty and Justice better when they observe them in objects, which have nothing but what gives horreur to the Senses, such as the members of Martyrs were, when covered over with Wounds; may we not say also that they cannot acknowledge better that they love Truth for it self, then when presented to us in discourses wherein we can love nothing but it, and where we find also an infinite of displeasing things. Thus these sorts of Sermons may be made good use of to honour Truth for it self, without dividing the homage which we give to it. And the least Truth honoured in this sort would be able to edifie us more then the most touching instructions which please the mind better.

18. There are almost no Sermons so bad, whereby a man may not be edified, if what be said therein be new, and that we know nothing what it contains by means of any other way. There is not, for Example, any Discourse so cold either of *Paradice* or *Hell*, but makes great Impressions upon us, if we have never heard speak thereof elsewhere.

That

That which takes away the thought of these things is then that they are already known to us, and that we are accustomed thereunto. But if we cannot avoid this cause of human Infirmary, we may very well at least humble our selves thereby, and make use of it to acknowledge that human Wit is of so little or no account, seeing that the same objects which have justly touched it at one time, doe not at another, through this vain circumstance, that it is accustomed therunto; as though this custome did change the nature of those objects, and took any thing from them of what they have either of terrible or great.

19. 'Tis one of the reflections which the Sermons called bad gives leave to make, and many more may be added to it of this nature, in making use of what shocks us therein to know our proper faults. And in considering them in this prospect, The more a Sermon is filled with human defects, the more it would be proper for us to serve as a draught of what we are, and the manner how we act. For the lives of Christians ought to be a continual Preaching, which should carry into the mind of others a lively Image of all Vertues. *St. Peter*
the

the Apostle recommends to us the insinuating of Humility in all things. *Humilitatem in omnibus insinuates*, that is to say, that he wills Christians to preach Humility in all their actions. The same may be said of all other Vertues, and we ought to do nothing which may not help to engrave them in the heart of others, as a Preacher ought to say nothing which is not edifying to his Auditors. Nevertheless how far are our actions from making this Impression upon the minds of those that see them? On the contrary what do we most commonly bring thither, but the Image of our Passions, of our disorderly Motions, of our secret Interests? We preach almost by our actions as they preach by their words, and we acquit our selves of the general Ministry of Christians, as they acquit themselves of the particular Ministry of Preachers: Let us not look upon their faults alone, but upon our own in theirs, and let us turn one part of that disgust we have for them against our selves.

20. If we look narrowly thereunto, we shall find that the particular faults into which they fall, do much resemble ours, and have almost the same causes.

These

These people follow generally their thoughts and phancies without reflecting whether they will be proportioned to the mind of those who hearken to them. We follow also our Humours and Passions without any regard to proportion our Actions and Words to the minds of those with whom we live, which is the reason that we startle them a thousand ways, and that we do nothing that edifies them.

21. There are some Preachers who startle understanding and judicious Hearers in crying out without reason upon small things, in chaffing themselves about things which deserve it not, and by making appear I know not how many false Motives, which incommode strangely those who have the *Idea* of Justice as well for the Motives as the things.

But this defect, is it not infinitely, greater, and more frequent in our Lives than in Sermons? For how many motives slide into our actions and words, which are false, not according to Rhetorick, but according to Faith? Do we not often shew the inclination and esteeme we have for some actions, which ought to cause nothing but sentiments of horror? Do we not receive often-

times

times with scorn, and disdain things which ought to excite only Piety? How much do we extoll things which ought to appear mean, and disdainful to us? How much do we cry down some things, which indeed are noble and worthy to be admired? How cold do we speak of those we ought to have the greatest concern for? They are so many false motives by so much more dangerous, as they spring from the bad disposition of the heart; whereas those of Preachers denote often only in them a simple, and meer want of wit.

22. The more one hath the Idea of justness, be it for things or for motives, the more one deserves defects in Preachers. And hence one may say, that the reputation of many of them who make a great shew in this employment, is only grounded upon the little light of their Auditors. If we had also understanding spectators, and who had the Idea of the true motives that the objects ought to excite in us, the manner whereby we act and speak, would become almost insupportable to them. They would only see in us depraved Inclinations, unjust Impressions, lack of sense and love for things

things which deserve most, and they would find in respect of us, something of that Holy Commotion, which Jesus Christ shewed in regard of the Jews by these words. *O generatio incredula quousque vos patiar!* the meekness with which men bear with us, is not then any thing but the effect of blindness of men. We only surpass by the favour of their want of light, and it is very just that we should suffer patiently in others, what they suffer continually from us.

23. What diverts Preachers from the right way, and casts them upon false eloquence, upon vain thoughts, and of no edification, is often because they have other prospects, than they ought to have in acquitting themselves of their ministry. They would appear Wise, Eloquent, and Able, they would appear wits; in a word they speak for themselves, and not for their Auditors; and in speaking in this manner, they speak often neither for their Auditors nor themselves. These are likewise those false Prospects, which are mingled with our actions, which destroy the edification of them; if we had no other than to satisfy our obligation, and to serve our neighbor, they

they would spread an odour of Piety, which would gain hearts insensibly, but the passions and secret desires which are intermingled, hinder this effect, and produce ordinarily quite different impressions from those we pretend. The desire we make appear of exalting ourselves, makes us dis-esteemed in the eyes of other men. We please so much less, by how much it appears that we have had a design to please: and by a natural contradiction in men, they conceive justly passions, quite opposite to those which they observe in us.

24. These Preachers whereof we speak are particularly proper to make known the wretchedness and the blindness of mens vanity. They tire themselves in their Closets to bring forth brave thoughts; they overcharge their memory with labour, they distribute them with boldness, and afterwards they rise from their Chair well satisfied with themselves, imaging to have left a great Idea of themselves in their Auditors. For men do not seek these pretended high thoughts for any thing else but to please, and it is difficult that in thinking to please others, men please not themselves. Nevertheless

vertheless there is very often nothing at all that persons of Piety have a commiseration for these sorts of Sermons. Those who are not very charitable laugh at them, and almost all never think a quarter of an hour after them. 'Tis almost as men deal with us, when instead of searching the true good, they aim only at obtaining the good repute of men. We thereby become the object of their disdain and malignity, and those who are the most favourable to us, scarce trouble themselves with us, the space of one quarter of an hour.

25. The subtilty of these Preachers may yet serve to make us observe how little help we get from others to correct our selves of our faults. For altho there be none more exposed than those of Preachers, nevertheless, there is nothing more ordinary than to see some who remain all their life, without finding one single person, who advertises them of it. Men think that tis a civility due to testify to them, that they are satisfied with their Sermons; and those Civilitys being received through Self-Love, pass for sincere testimonies and authentick approbations. Thus a Preacher deceived
ceived

ceived by others, and by himself, continues oftentimes to abuse his Ministry all his life; he destroys instead of building, and he drains unprofitably, not only the Forces of his Body, but also those of his Soul, which yet is impaired more than the Body by this employ, when he acquits himself not as he ought.

26. It is less strange, that the Preachers, who are subject to none, correct themselves in their faults but very little. They are generally called to this Ministry, they preach when they will, and as they will, and no man is particularly concerned how they do it. But who will not be astonish'd, that Preachers chosen by regular Societies, where men admit them not to this Ministry, but with Discretion, Caution, and mature Deliberation, should oftentimes make shew of so little Spirituality and Light in their Sermons, and that they should not stuff them less than others, with mean and unprofitable Scholastick terms.

That which ought to increase our admiration upon this point, is that in the same Orders wherein men suffer;

R

Thus

Thus persons to preach as they please, and with faults visibly contrary to the intent of their Ministry; they should not suffer them to make a false step in their Ceremonies, a mistake in bowing, or that they should want the least of their regular Practices. There are in these sorts of Societies, punishments ordained for all faults, against regularity; but there are none at all for those who abuse the word of God, whether in distributing it to the people in vain, and abstract thoughts, instead of giving them a solid nourishment, and proportion'd to their occasions; or in destroying the fruit of the Truths they declared by an ostentation of Knowledge and Eloquence. They leave absolutely to the Preachers, the manner whereby they acquit themselves of their Ministry. They let them follow their Ideas, and if they give them some Rules to govern themselves by, they are so extravagant, and so little exact, that they think to follow them, by doing quite the contrary to what they ought.

27. We cannot doubtless, alleadge any other reason for this Conduct, unless that they know very well in these Societies, in what consists the manner of practising the Ceremonies; but have a very small Idea, what 'tis to pronounce Gods Word in a way worthy of him, and know scarcely the importance of some faults which are committed in abusing of this Ministry, and in relating it to our Selves, and not to the benefit of our Auditors.

This is the conclusion which methinks should be drawn from thence, but it extends it self much further than this example; and if we will do our selves justice, we shall find that it Concerns us divers and sundry ways. Because we are exact in the practice of certain exterior Duties, even to the being fixed thereunto, in a superstitious and judicial manner; but we have only very confus'd Ideas of the greatest part of Spiritual Duties, and Interior Virtues; which is the reason that we scarcely know the faults we commit against these Duties and Virtues. We know not what true Humility, inward mortification, the love of justice, the dependance
upon

264 *The means of profiting*

upon God, and the desire of suffering is: And as they are these inward Virtues, which are the source of the Union, and Edification, which spread themselves into our Actions and Words; it is not strange, that not knowing them, and likewise not having a true Idea of them, there is nothing that's edifying either in our Conversation, or in our Lives.

FINIS.

[illegible]

264 *The means of profiting*

upon God, and the desire of suffering
is: And as they are these inward Vir-
tues, which are the source of the Uncti-
on, and Edification, which spread them-
selves into our Actions and Words; it
is not strange, that not knowing them,
and likewise not having a true Idea of
them, there is nothing that's edifying
either in our Conversation, or in our
Lives.

FINIS.

